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*NORMAL STUDIES FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS*

THE  
MODERN SUNDAY SCHOOL.  
BY  
VARIOUS WRITERS.

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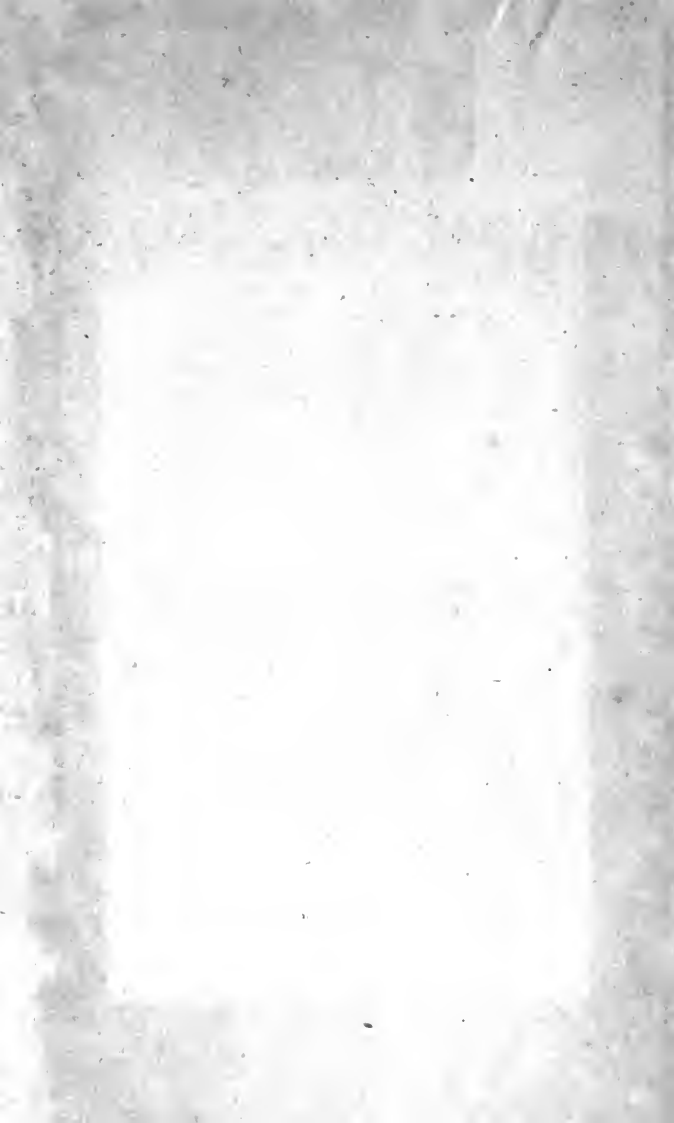
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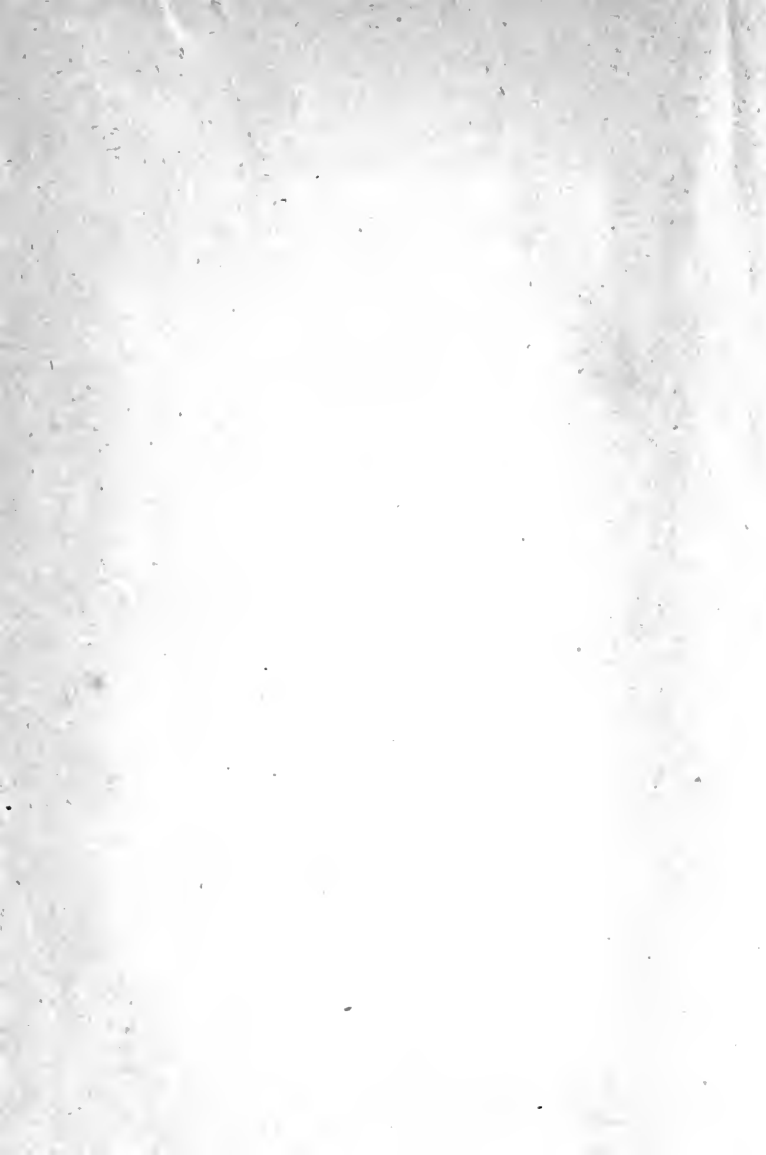
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ACQUIRED 1948

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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION





# THE MODERN SUNDAY SCHOOL.

ONE of the suggestions resulting from the Centenary Celebration of Sunday Schools in 1880, was the formation of an International Normal Committee for the purpose of promoting and assisting normal study among Sunday school teachers. It was felt that there were thousands of teachers anxious to attain fitness for their work, who had no opportunity of attending normal classes, but who would be glad to be aided and directed in their study, if suitable handbooks were placed within their reach, and if a simple scheme of examination, by correspondence or otherwise, were prepared. With this view the accompanying handbook is issued. The Committee, whose names are appended, was appointed by virtue of powers granted by resolution of a public meeting, held in the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, during the Centenary week.

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Rev. J. H. VINCENT, D.D., Sunday School Editor, of America, Methodist Episcopal Church.

*NORMAL STUDIES FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS.*

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# THE MODERN SUNDAY SCHOOL.

BY  
VARIOUS WRITERS.

*PREPARED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF  
THE INTERNATIONAL NORMAL COMMITTEE.*

LONDON:  
SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION,  
56, OLD BAILEY, E.C.





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SUNDAY SCHOOL.

By FOUNTAIN J. HARTLEY.

THE ADVANTAGES OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL  
SYSTEM.

By BENJAMIN CLARKE.

THE RELATION OF ADULTS TO THE SUNDAY  
SCHOOL.

By REV. CHARLES H. KELLY.

ON THE CONSTITUTION, ORGANIZATION, AND  
MANAGEMENT OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

By BENJAMIN CLARKE.

ON THE MUTUAL DUTIES OF SCHOOL OFFICERS,  
TEACHERS, AND SCHOLARS.

By BENJAMIN CLARKE.

ON ASSOCIATED EFFORT: PREPARATION,  
TRAINING AND NORMAL CLASSES, CON-  
VENTIONS, ETC.

By ALFRED SINDALL.

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# THE MODERN SUNDAY SCHOOL.

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## THE HISTORY AND STATISTICS OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

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### DIVINE PROVISION FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

THE necessity and importance of the religious education of the young have in all ages of the world been more or less recognized by the people of God, and the obligation of parental instruction is repeatedly enforced in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments.

No records of the practice of the antediluvian patriarchs are given to us in Holy Writ, though we cannot suppose that such men as Enoch and Noah would neglect the duty of teaching their children at home.

But in the case of Abraham we have the divine testimony, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord" (Gen. xviii. 19).

With this testimony before us, we cannot doubt that the pious patriarch was in the habit of gathering his family around him, that he might instruct them in the character and claims of his covenanted God; and if, as is generally believed, the sabbath was kept in these early

times, that day would in all probability be especially consecrated to this good work; and thus we may look upon Abraham, the friend of God, as one of the earliest and noblest of the race of Sunday school teachers.

Passing on to the Mosaic dispensation, we have the distinct command addressed to the people of Israel, "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house . . ." (Deut. vi. 6, 7). In addition to this provision for home instruction, directions were given that the children should appear with their parents in the assembly of the congregation (Exod. xxxiv. 23; Deut. xxxi. 12); and when Joshua read out to the people from Mount Ebal the words of the law, with its blessings and cursings, "the little ones" were there, as well as their parents, and "the strangers that were conversant among them" (Joshua viii. 35).

From these passages, as well as from some statements in the Mishna and from Luke ii. 42, it has been inferred that it was the custom for Jewish parents to associate their children with them in the public worship of God from about the age of twelve years. The "sons of the prophets," to whom allusions are made in the books of Samuel and Kings, were in all probability associations of young men in schools or colleges for religious instruction and training.

Numerous passages occur throughout the Old Testament tending to show the duty of God's people towards the young. Hence David invites the children to come to him that he might teach them the fear of the Lord (Ps. xxxiv. 11); Solomon gives the exhortation, "Train up a child in the way he should go" (Prov. xxii. 6); and the prophet Isaiah records the divine promise so full of encouragement to parents and teachers—"I will pour My spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thy offspring: and they shall

spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob" (Isa. xlv. 3, 4).

Turning now to the New Testament, we learn what immense importance is attached to the instruction and nurture of the young.

Jesus, the Teacher sent from God, displayed His love to the children, and gave them a share of His instructions, while He encouraged the mothers who brought them to receive His blessing, by His gracious reception and loving words, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Luke xviii. 16). And before ascending to His heavenly Father, the Good Shepherd manifested His tender concern for the young and weak of His flock by the commission given to His erring but repentant and pardoned disciple, "Feed My lambs."

Although this injunction was addressed in the first instance to Peter alone, it was doubtless intended to be binding on all the disciples, and we are warranted in regarding the Saviour's words as teaching the lesson that the Church has a duty to discharge towards the young distinct from and additional to the parental obligation afterwards enforced by the Apostle Paul: "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

During the apostolic age, the instruction of the young appears to have been mainly confined to the parent and the home, and although the apostles did not forget the children either in their public ministrations or in their epistles, nothing is recorded in the New Testament to show that any organized effort was made by them towards the carrying out of the commission they had received from their Master, to feed His lambs.

Hence we cannot produce any scriptural warrant for the institution of Sunday schools, except that which is supplied by the spirit of our Lord's teaching and that of His apostles; but surely this is amply sufficient to justify

the employment of any machinery adapted to promote the instruction of the young in the principles of divine truth, and their introduction to the Church of the Redeemer.

We know that Jesus Christ sent forth His disciples to "teach all nations" and to "preach the gospel to every creature," and there can be no doubt that the younger as well as the older, the children of unbelievers as well as of believers, were included in the commission, so that the germ of the Sunday school was embedded in the original design of the Saviour, as well as in the practice of His apostles, who went forth and "ceased not to teach and to preach the Lord Jesus."

#### EARLY CHURCH HISTORY.

Ecclesiastical history, however, is not altogether silent upon the subject, and, indeed, affords conclusive evidence that the early disciples were not unmindful of the duties involved in the commission of their Lord and Master.

Mosheim, the celebrated historian of the ancient Church, testifies that "the Christians took all possible care to accustom their children to the study of the Scriptures, and to instruct them in the doctrines of their holy religion; and schools were everywhere erected for this purpose even from the very commencement of the Christian Church. We must not, however, confound the *schools* designed only for children, with the *gymnasia* or academies of the ancient Christians, erected in several large cities, in which persons of riper years, and especially such as aspired to be public teachers, were instructed in the different branches both of human learning and of sacred erudition. We may undoubtedly attribute to the apostles themselves, and to the injunctions given to their disciples, the excellent establishments, in which the youth destined to the holy ministry received an education suitable to the solemn office they were to undertake. St. John erected a school of this kind



at Ephesus, and one of the same nature was founded by Polycarp at Smyrna; but these were not in greater repute than that which was established at Alexandria, commonly called the *catechetical school*, and generally supposed to have been erected by St. Mark. The Alexandrian school was renowned for a succession of learned doctors, as we find by the accounts of Eusebius and St. Jerome; for after St. Mark, Pantænus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, and many others, taught in it the doctrines of the gospel, and rendered it a famous seminary for Christian philosophy and religious knowledge. There were also at Rome, Antioch, Cæsarea, Edessa, and in several other cities, schools of the same nature, though not all of equal reputation.”\*

The catechumen classes, which rendered great service during the second and third centuries of the Christian era, though not precisely resembling either the schools for children or the academies for more advanced scholars, thus described by the historian, appear to have grown up out of those institutions; and as these classes of catechumens are regarded by some writers as the actual beginning of the Sunday school system, it will be well to inquire a little more closely into their constitution and management, in order to discover whether they bore any resemblance to the institution founded by Robert Raikes, or to the modern Sunday school as it now exists in England and America.

In the third volume of De Pressensé's “Christian Life and Practices of the Early Church,” that eminent writer refers at some length to the classes of catechumens, and describes the object and methods pursued in these ancient institutions. From this account it appears—

I. That these classes were intended for the instruction of candidates for Church fellowship, who received therein a course of training lasting usually for three years, preparatory to their baptism. This teaching was rendered

\* Mosheim's “Ecclesiastical History,” vol. i. page 105.

especially necessary by the fact that the proselytes came steeped in idolatrous practices from every quarter of the pagan world, and often from the deep degradation of a life of slavery.

The first year was devoted to laying firmly the basis of all religious teaching by developing the idea of a true God, who is at once the Ruler and the Father of all beings. In its second division, the catechetical teaching was directed to the doctrine of Christ, His eternal relation to the Father as the only Son, and His redeeming work as the Saviour. Lastly, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit was set forth. After three years of instruction, the catechumen whose testimonials were good was made the subject of a careful examination, which, if satisfactory, qualified him for baptism.

II. The classes met for instruction on the sabbath day, just previous to the hour of public worship.

III. The scholars were mostly, if not exclusively, adults. In the church at Antioch, the prayer with which they were dismissed before the celebration of the Eucharist contained this petition, "May He bless their children, and spare them to them."

IV. The teachers were not necessarily ecclesiastics, but laymen might be called to fulfil this high trust, the ancient Church attaching far more importance to intellectual competency than to official dignity for such a work.

If this description of the catechumen classes be correct, they had very little in common with the modern Sunday school, which is carried on chiefly, though not exclusively, for children, which takes them up at an earlier stage than is involved in a candidature for Church fellowship, and which retains them in many cases long after their union with the Church has been consummated.

At the same time, as these classes certainly met on Sunday, and as their object undoubtedly was religious instruction, there is at least some ground for the opinion

expressed in *The Church School* by Dr. Vincent, of New York: "The good philanthropists of the last century, in digging that they might build a human fabric, laid bare an ancient and divine foundation. Let us rear our superstructure upon this rather than upon their narrow bases and after their scantier measurements."

But even if we had to come to the conclusion that the institution founded by Raikes, and the modern Sunday school of the Church, which has grown out of it, are to be regarded as a mere revival of the ancient catechumen classes, and that therefore Sunday schools are seventeen or eighteen hundred years old instead of one hundred, inasmuch as these classes had fallen into desuetude for something like fifteen centuries, Robert Raikes would have to be regarded as the *refounder*, instead of the founder, of Sunday schools—a position which would not materially reduce his claims to the gratitude and reverence of the wise and good.

Whatever view may be taken, however, of the question under discussion, the example of the early Christians throws considerable light on two points of great importance in the present day: First, that the Church has a distinct and definite duty to discharge in the matter of religious instruction, besides and beyond the public ministration of the gospel and the home teaching of the parent; and secondly, that inasmuch as such men as Clement and Origen undertook the office and gloried in the name of catechist, it is obviously the duty of the Christian Church to dedicate the very highest talent which it possesses to this important work.

The classes of catechumens ceased to exist after the first three or four centuries of the Christian era, and little further is known of the progress of religious instruction until after the Reformation.

During the dark ages nothing was being done for the promotion of Christian education, excepting by the univer-

sities and the several cathedral and conventual schools, and these institutions were pretty exclusively confined to the upper classes of society.

### CATECHETICAL INSTRUCTION.

With the dawn of the Reformation more hopeful times set in for the cause of religious instruction.

Luther found the people in a most fearful state of ignorance. He opened day schools for the instruction of children, and induced the evangelical clergymen to assemble these day scholars in the churches on Sunday afternoon, for catechetical instruction.

John Knox took a similar course in Scotland, and one of the earliest indications of a reviving interest in the cause of religious teaching in England was the duty imposed upon the clergy of catechizing their parishioners, both old and young, in the churches upon the sabbath day. But this was not very extensively observed, and Archbishop Cranmer spoke, in the dedication of his Catechism to King Edward VI., in the year 1548, of the neglect into which this practice had fallen, notwithstanding the royal injunction for its strict observance promulgated twelve years before.

A clause in the Constitution of 1571, issued in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, again enjoined that "On every Sunday and holiday, at twelve o'clock, the clergy shall repair to their churches, and there spend two hours at least in reading and explaining the catechism; they shall instruct therein all their parishioners of every age and condition; and they shall take especial care that none be permitted to receive the communion or to contract marriage before they can well and sufficiently answer all the questions in the catechism."

This practice, however, seems to have been very partially carried out, for about twenty years later Arch-

1698: de la Salle, <sup>(French Mission)</sup> established, for his study 20 2  
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bishop Whitgift complained of the desuetude into which it had fallen, though for more than a century conscientious clergymen were found here and there diligently discharging their duty in this particular.

These catechetical exercises undoubtedly did good service so far as they went, but there was nothing about them which could be identified with the institutions afterwards established by Raikes and his coadjutors.

The same remark applies to the schools founded about the middle of the sixteenth century, throughout his diocese, by Cardinal Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan, who is regarded by many as the actual originator of the Sunday school system. But as these schools were mainly secular, and entirely subject to the control of the priests, they had even less in common with the modern Sunday school than the catechumen classes of the second century. X

Many of the Nonconforming divines, including Richard Baxter and Joseph Alleine, were persistent in their adherence to the practice of catechizing the young on the sabbath day.

More than a century before the establishment of Sunday schools at Gloucester, the Rev. Joseph Alleine, author of the well-known book, "An Alarm to the Unconverted," who was ejected from his living in 1662, and imprisoned for preaching in 1663, resumed his useful labours immediately after his liberation, and, in addition to his ministerial and literary engagements, found time on the Sabbath day to instruct the children of Taunton in the truths of God's Word. It does not appear that any of his people were associated with him in this work, so that the gathering was rather a minister's class than a Sunday school; but, at any rate, it showed his earnest desire to feed the lambs, in obedience to his Master's command, and to provide instruction for the ignorant as well as to sound an alarm to the unconverted.

## PIONEERS OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Among the numerous pioneers in the good work we find that Mrs. Catherine Boevey, of Flaxley Abbey, in the county of Gloucester, who died in the year 1726, nine years before Robert Raikes was born, had one of the earliest and most attractive Sunday schools on record.

That excellent lady was in the regular habit of giving dinners to a few poor children on the Lord's day, and afterwards hearing them repeat their catechism, and feeding their souls with the bread of life.

There is no doubt that the food and clothing which she so liberally supplied, secured the attendance of the limited number she received, and in all probability the instruction she gave was none the less effective because it was preceded by the supply of physical necessities.

Sunday schools of such a type could not, however, be expected to prevail very extensively, though some approach to this order of things is even now occasionally attempted; and in all cases teachers are likely to increase their power for good by remembering that their scholars have bodies as well as souls, and by manifesting an interest in their temporal as well as in their spiritual wellbeing.

In America, too, some early efforts were made towards the religious instruction of the young on the Lord's day.

Some of these movements very closely resembled the ministers' classes conducted by Alleine and Baxter in England, while the others, like most of the English efforts prior to Raikes, were isolated ones, lasting, in most cases, but for a short time.

In Plymouth, Massachusetts, the records of the Pilgrim Church show that in 1680 the Church expressed its wish by a vote, "That the deacons of the Church be requested to assist the minister, the Rev. John Robinson, in teaching the children during the intermission on the Sabbath."

In the same year the Rev. Morgan Jones is said to have had a Sunday school in successful operation at New Town, Queen's County.

In 1735, a church and Sunday school were established at a place called Towamencin, in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, by a colony of immigrants from Silesia.

In 1737 the Rev. John Wesley, then engaged in evangelistic labour in South America, instituted Sunday afternoon classes at Savannah, which were continued by his brother, the Rev. Charles Wesley, and by the Rev. George Whitfield.

In 1740 the Rev. Joseph Bellamy, D.D., of Bethlehem, Connecticut, established a Sunday school in that town, which, with some modification, continued until Sunday schools became general.

About the same time the Rev. Ludwig Hacker opened a Sunday school in connection with the Seventh Day Baptists, at Ephrata, in Pennsylvania, which was continued until 1777, when the building in which it was held was taken for a hospital, after the battle of Brandywine.

Returning to England, we find that a Sunday school was established at Catterick, near Richmond, in Yorkshire, about the year 1763, by the vicar, the Rev. Theophilus Lindsay, who afterwards became a Unitarian minister, and preached for some years in Essex Street Chapel, London.

Miss Harrison, the daughter of a clergyman (who afterwards became the wife of the Rev. Newcombe Cappe, of York), being at the time a visitor at the house of Mr. Lindsay, says, in her autobiography, "At two o'clock, before the commencement of the afternoon service, he spent an hour alternately in catechizing the children of the parish, and in expounding the Bible to the boys of a large school, numbering about two hundred."

This effort seems to have been something more than the performance of the duty imposed upon the clergy of catechizing their parishioners, because we are further in-

formed that Mr. Lindsay was wont, after evening service, to receive different classes of young men and women into his study for the purpose of giving them further instruction, and that Mrs. Lindsay in like manner instructed two classes of children, boys and girls alternately.

Miss Harrison herself went home to copy the good example she had witnessed, and established a Sunday school at Bedale in the same county, as will appear from another extract from her autobiography: "I endeavoured to imitate at Bedale the example which I had so much admired at Catterick. I established a sort of Sunday school there, collecting together a number of poor children, whom I assisted in learning to read, giving them books, teaching them Dr. Watts' shorter catechism, together with his devotional hymns and divine songs, and endeavouring to give such instructions as might enable them to read the Holy Scriptures with more intelligence. I had no place in which to receive them but the back kitchen, which being small, we were exceedingly crowded, but the young ones became attached to me, and liked to attend; and, to prevent confusion, I divided them into classes, which succeeded each other, so that on the Sunday I was occupied by a succession of children nearly the whole day, except during the time I attended church. . . . I could not prevail upon any of the young people in the town, the daughters of tradesmen and others, to contribute in any manner towards my Sunday school. The experiment was quite new, and far from being popular, as these institutions have since happily become, first by the benevolent exertions of Mr. Raikes, and afterwards by the countenance and support of many worthy persons of all sects and parties throughout the kingdom. The attempt was at that time considered as enthusiastic and visionary. I was regarded as a well-meaning young woman, but odd and singular, a fair mark for the shafts of ridicule, and one whose society was rather to be avoided than sought after and desired."



No further allusions are made in the autobiography to this interesting movement, and it does not appear to have been of very long continuance.

In 1769 one of the most satisfactory and suggestive of these early specimens of Sunday school work was inaugurated at High Wycombe by Miss Hannah Ball, a young lady belonging to the Wesleyan Methodists, who, in a letter to John Wesley, explained her plan as follows:—"The children meet twice a week, every Sunday and Monday. They are a wild little company, but seem willing to be instructed. I labour among them earnestly, desiring to promote the interests of the Church of Christ."

Nor did she labour in vain, as the following extracts from her diary will abundantly testify. Under the date January 12, 1771, she says, "Some part of the Sabbath day is devoted to instructing the children in the principles of the Christian religion. It is exceedingly difficult to fix a sense of the evil of sin or of the fear of God on the minds of children, and turn them from darkness to light."

"*February 8, 1776.*—Praying with some children, whom I meet every Sabbath day to instruct in the principles of Christianity."

On the first Sabbath in May, 1776, she writes: "In the meeting of the children, one, about fourteen years of age, said she had found the love of Jesus shed abroad in her heart."

These extracts conclusively prove that Hannah Ball was indeed a *model* teacher. She fully realized the nature and difficulties of her work, and her entire dependence on the influence of the Holy Spirit, and laboured hard in the discharge of her duty, while she distinctly recognized the fact that only the love of Jesus could draw out the affection of youthful hearts.

It is refreshing and stimulating to find that the first great object of Sunday school instruction—bringing the scholars to Jesus—is not a modern discovery, but that

more than a hundred years ago, an earnest teacher was praying and looking for this glorious result, and found, to the joy and rejoicing of her heart, as thousands of teachers have found since her day, that "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

In 1770 Dr. Kennedy established a Sunday school at County Down, in Ireland, the chief purpose of which was to instruct the children in the practice of psalmody, but after the efforts of Mr. Raikes had been made public, this school was re-organized upon the same model.

In this same year (1770) the earliest Welsh school was established at Crawlem, near Llandidloes, by one Jenkin Morgan, a native of Cardiganshire, who, besides being a preacher, was one of the schoolmasters employed by Madame Bevan in her circulating schools.

In 1775 James Hay, generally known as "Old Jemmy o' the Hey," opened a Sunday school at Little Lever, near Bolton, in Lancashire, in which he taught the boys and girls of the neighbourhood to read. His school assembled twice each Sunday in the cottage of a neighbour, and the time of commencing was announced by the ringing, not of a bell, but of an excellent substitute, an old brass pestle and mortar! After a while Mr. Adam Compton, a paper manufacturer in the neighbourhood, began to supply Jemmy with books, and subscriptions in money were given him. He was thus enabled to form three branch establishments, the teachers of which were paid one shilling each per Sunday for their services.

In 1778, two years before Robert Raikes opened his first Sunday school, the Rev. David Simpson, minister of Christchurch, Macclesfield, commenced the work of instructing the young on the Lord's day.

Mr. Simpson was a truly godly man, contemporary and joined in fraternal intercourse with Romaine, Berridge, Hill, Venn, Fletcher, and Robinson, amongst whom there

was a recorded agreement "to remember each other in their solemn preparation for each Lord's day, by retiring from six to seven o'clock on Saturday evenings to implore of the Lord for themselves and the people all spiritual blessings."

Sir John Bickerton Williams, in his memoir of Mr. Simpson, states that "he established a Sabbath charity school long before the worthy Mr. Raikes, of Gloucester, formed his plan."

The scholars were instructed on week-day evenings at different schools in private houses, and on Sundays they were taught, along with others who could not attend during the week, to spell and read, and the whole of them were regularly taken to church every Sabbath day.

The teachers were paid; and until 1786 the schools were under the entire direction of Mr. Simpson, but in that year an alteration took place by Mr. Simpson confiding their management to a committee of gentlemen. The number of scholars then under direction was 412, and the annual expenses amounted to about £120.

In the same year, 1778, it is said that the Rev. Thomas Stock, who was afterwards associated with Robert Raikes in Gloucester, had a Sunday school in the parish of Ashbury, in Berkshire; but little or nothing is known of this effort, which was in all probability of the same nature as the catechetical exercises previously mentioned.

About this time, also, Mr. King, of Dursley, established a Sunday school, which, it is stated, failed for want of co-operation, though Mr. King himself never lost faith in the plan.

#### ROBERT RAIKES.

We now come to the year 1780, when Robert Raikes commenced that work in the city of Gloucester which was destined to spread throughout the world, and the humble beginnings of which shall be given in his own words.

In a letter addressed to Colonel Townley, of Sheffield, three years after the establishment of the Gloucester schools, Robert Raikes gives the following account of the circumstances which induced him to commence his good work:—

“Some business leading me one morning into the suburbs of the city, where the lowest of the people (who are principally employed in the pin manufactory) chiefly reside, I was struck with concern at seeing a group of children, wretchedly ragged, at play in the streets. I asked an inhabitant whether these children belonged to that part of the town, and lamented their misery and idleness. ‘Ah, sir,’ said the woman, to whom I was speaking, ‘could you take a view of this part of the town on a Sunday, you would be shocked indeed; for then the street is filled with multitudes of these wretches, who, released that day from employment, spend their time in noise and riot, playing at “chuck,” and cursing and swearing in a manner so horrid as to convey to any serious mind an idea of hell rather than any other place. We have a worthy clergyman,’ said she, ‘curate of our parish, who has put some of them to school; but upon the Sabbath they are all given up to follow their own inclinations without restraint, as their parents, totally abandoned themselves, have no idea of instilling into the minds of their children principles to which they themselves are entire strangers.’

“This conversation suggested to me that it would be at least a harmless attempt, if it were productive of no good, should some little plan be formed to check the deplorable profanation of the Sabbath. I then inquired of the woman if there were any decent, well-disposed women in the neighbourhood who kept schools for teaching to read. I presently was directed to four. To these I applied, and made an agreement with them to receive as many children as I should send upon the Sunday, whom they were to instruct in reading and in the Church catechism. For this I

engaged to pay them each a shilling for their day's employment. The women seemed pleased with the proposal. I then waited on the clergyman before mentioned, and imparted to him my plan. He was so much satisfied with the idea that he engaged to lend his assistance by going round to the schools on a Sunday afternoon to examine the progress that was made, and to enforce order and decorum among such a set of little heathens."

Walking with a friend some years afterwards, Mr. Raikes said when they reached a certain place, "Pause here;" and so saying, he uncovered his brow, closed his eyes, and stood for a moment in silent prayer. That silent prayer ascended to the ear of the crucified Christ, and the tears rolled down his cheeks as he said to his friend, "This is the spot on which I stood when I saw the destitution of the children, and the desecration of the sabbath by the inhabitants of the town; and I asked, 'Can nothing be done?' and a voice answered, 'Try!' and I did try, and see what God hath wrought."

According to Mr. Alfred Gregory, the biographer of Raikes, the first of the Gloucester Sunday schools was established in the month of July, 1780,\* by Robert Raikes, in association with the Rev. T. Stock, in a cottage which is still standing in St. Catherine's Street, and which was then occupied by Mr. King, whose wife became the first teacher at a salary of one shilling or one shilling and sixpence per week.

The late Mr. W. H. Watson, in his "First Fifty Years of the Sunday School," mentions 1781 as the year of institution, and the Sunday School Jubilee was accordingly held in 1831; but in preparing for the centenary gatherings, the committee of the Sunday School Union came to the conclusion that Mr. Gregory's date was most likely correct, and, therefore, arranged for the celebration to take place in June and July, 1880. One of the grounds

\* See Gregory's "Life of Robert Raikes," page 72.

on which that conclusion was reached was the fact that in the letter to Colonel Townley, already alluded to, and dated November 25, 1783, Raikes stated, "It is now three years since we began."

The second school was in all probability instituted by Mr. Raikes alone in his own parish of St. Mary-de-Crypt, at a house at the corner of Grey Friars and Southgate Street, and was taught by a Mrs. Sarah Critchley.

The third school is believed to have been founded by the Rev. T. Stock, at 103, Northgate Street, in the parish of St. John's, and several others soon sprang up in the other parts of the city.

As to the question about which so much discussion has taken place, namely, whether Mr. Raikes can properly be designated the founder of Sunday schools (or their re-founder, supposing them to be a revival of the catechumen classes of the early centuries), whether the honour should be divided with the Rev. Thomas Stock, or given to him altogether, or whether both of these gentlemen should be set aside in favour of one of the earlier pioneers to whom reference has already been made, no better reply can be given than that furnished by the words of the Rev. John Burder, of Stroud, who said, "On the whole, I see no cause for denying to Mr. Raikes the reputation of having been the founder of Sunday schools; at any rate, he bears to that system a relation very similar to that which Dr. Jenner bears to vaccination. Before Jenner's time, it was known in some farmhouses that persons employed in milking cows did not take the small-pox when that grievous malady prevailed around them; but Jenner was the man who not only gave publicity to the fact, but also ascertained and made known to Britain and the world what steps should be adopted in order to render vaccination a defence against that plague."

No one could assert that the mind of Raikes was the first to conceive the idea of instructing children on the

sabbath day, after the numerous instances already given in previous pages; but all these were isolated cases, having no connection, and, with one or two exceptions, no continuity. The claim of Raikes to be considered the founder of Sunday schools (or, rather, the claim made on his behalf by those who have raised a statue to his memory), rests upon the fact that by his letters and the articles published in the *Gloucester Journal*, of which he was editor, he gave the widest publicity to the movement; that he persevered in his advocacy of the infant institution until Sunday schools were established in every part of the land, and extended so rapidly that in five or six years the number of scholars amounted to about a quarter of a million. To sum up in the words of Mr. Stock himself, "The progress of this institution throughout the kingdom is justly attributed to the constant representations which Mr. Raikes made in his own paper of the benefits which he perceived would probably arise from it."

#### EARLY COADJUTORS.

At the same time, it is quite certain that Mr. Raikes found an able and interested coadjutor in Mr. Stock, who by his hearty co-operation rendered immense service in the establishment and supervision of the Sunday schools in Gloucester.

Nor was the Rev. T. Stock the only clergyman who rendered aid in the early stages of this work.

Mr. Raikes bears witness that "One or two clergymen gave their assistance by going round to the schools on the Sunday afternoons, to hear the children their catechism. This was of great consequence. Another clergyman hears their catechism once a quarter publicly in church, and rewards their good behaviour with some little gratuity."

It would have been strange, too, if no member of the

gentler sex had taken part in the early stages of this movement; and, fortunately for our theory, there was a young lady named Sophia Cook, living at Gloucester, in 1780, with her uncle, Mr. Alderman Weaver, who took a great interest in the work of Robert Raikes, and had herself formed similar plans for the benefit of the children employed in her uncle's pin manufactory.

This lady was afterwards married to the Rev. Samuel Bradburn, an eminent Methodist minister; and her daughter, Amelia Cowell Bradburn, stated in a letter to the *Evangelical Magazine* of 1833, that her mother went to church with Mr. Raikes and his scholars on the very first Sunday his school was opened.

Thus, at the very commencement of the Sunday school enterprise, two important principles were illustrated, both of which have had an immense influence in its development and success.

The first of these principles is the union of the clerical with the lay element in works of Christian usefulness. Until the establishment of Sunday schools, there was but little employment for lay agency; and, indeed, one of the greatest of the early obstacles to the progress of these institutions in the kingdom, *particularly in Scotland*, was the theory that the laity had nothing to do with teaching religion—an idea which still prevails in many parts of the continent of Europe, and greatly hinders the spread of the Sunday school cause.

Now, however, in our own country and in America, the ministry and the laity are closely united in the conduct of these institutions, and it is invariably found that the more this harmonious activity is developed, the better it is for the Sunday school.

The other principle illustrated in the list of Robert Raikes' early coadjutors is the co-operation of the two sexes in the work of religious instruction.

With the establishment of Sunday schools, a noble and



appropriate sphere was opened up for the exertion of female influence, and right worthily has the sex availed itself of the opportunity presented.

There is little doubt that, as a rule, ladies take more kindly to the work of teaching than gentlemen do, and it is at any rate indisputable that they deserve a very large share of credit for bringing the Sunday school to its present high position, nor is it easy to say whether they or their scholars have received the greater benefit.

It was not long before the example of Raikes and his coadjutors was followed in all parts of the country.

Before any notice was taken of the movement by the public press, Sunday schools began to spring up, here and there, by a sort of lateral extension, resulting from the testimony of those who had seen their working in Gloucester, or who had family connections with the inhabitants of that city.

Very soon the seven or eight schools opened by Messrs. Raikes and Stock were added to by one established at Sheepscombe, a village near Gloucester, by Mr. Samuel Webb, the first teacher of which was a good man named John Twining, who lived to be nearly ninety years of age, and for several years received an annuity of twenty shillings from the Sunday School Union of Stroud.

Before the close of 1780, if the testimony of Mr. J. B. North, a captain in the merchant service, is to be relied on, a Sunday school existed in the town of Hertford, and on the 1st of January, 1781, a Bible was presented to young North, by Mr. Raikes himself, for regular attendance and good behaviour.

Within the next year or two there is reason to believe that other schools were established in the county of Gloucestershire and elsewhere, but on the 3rd of November, 1783, an article appeared in the *Gloucester Journal* which gave considerable impetus to the movement.

The article, which was copied into the London papers

and disseminated all over the kingdom, and in which Mr. Raikes, without mentioning his own name, gave an account of the origin and influence of Sunday schools, was followed up on the 25th of the same month by the letter to Colonel Townley, previously referred to, which afterwards appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. These articles, together with subsequent notices in Mr. Raikes' paper, created a large amount of public interest, drew forth numerous encomiums, and led to a wide and rapid extension of the system in all parts of the land:

A notable instance of the prompt and immediate influence of the first newspaper article on the subject occurred in the town of Oldham.

It is a well-attested fact that during the very month in which the article appeared, a Sunday school was commenced in the Oldham Grammar School by some gentlemen who had been influenced thereby.

In this same year a Sunday school was established in the parish of Bingley, in Yorkshire, which is rendered memorable by the visit and comments of the Rev. John Wesley, as recorded in his diary, under the date July 18, 1784:

"Before service I stepped into the Sunday school, which contains 240 children, taught every Sunday by several masters, and superintended by the curate. So many children in one parish are restrained from open sin, and taught a little good manners at least, as well as to read the Bible. *I find these schools springing up wherever I go.* Perhaps God may have a deeper end therein than men are aware of. Who knows but some of these schools may become nurseries for Christians?"

The manner in which God has answered these questions, and the extent to which He has exceeded the most sanguine anticipations of His servant, are truly marvellous, and call for the exercise of abundant gratitude.

## ESTABLISHMENT OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS IN LONDON.

The year 1784 was a memorable one in the early history of the Sunday-school enterprise.

Such was the impetus given to the movement by the article in the *Gloucester Journal*, and the letter to Colonel Townley, that before the end of that year Sunday schools had been established in London, Leeds, Chester, Stockport, Painswick, Stroud, Stonehouse, and many other places, the schools at Leeds alone containing more than two thousand scholars.

During this year it is believed the first Sunday school established in London, which owed its origin to the well-known Rev. Rowland Hill, was opened in Surrey Chapel, where it continued to meet until the adjoining school-house was built.

This school became the parent of a large number of similar institutions in the immediate neighbourhood, which ultimately developed into the "Southwark Sunday School Society," and has conferred immense benefits on the population in the south of London.

The second metropolitan Sunday school, and the first in the county of Middlesex, was established at Hoxton, by Mr. James Kemp, only one week after the commencement of Surrey Chapel school.

Some facts connected with the opening of this school deserve special notice.

James Kemp, who was a working shoemaker, had for some years contemplated a similar work to that inaugurated by Raikes, but was deterred from the undertaking because he had some scruples as to the propriety of employing the sabbath for the purposes of education, and some fears that religious people would discourage such an effort. But when he heard that Mr. Raikes, of Gloucester, had set up schools to be held on Sunday, he resolved to try and follow his example. As, however, the only information he had received

was but vague and indefinite, he thought it advisable to go to Gloucester, and see with his own eyes the progress of the work.

The "fast coach," which then took two days to accomplish the distance of a hundred and ten miles, and the same time for the return journey, involved too large an expense for his scanty means, and he therefore resolved to tramp the whole distance there and back. This he accomplished, and, after a pleasant interview with Mr. Raikes, and a sight of the good work he was doing, he returned to town full of faith and hope, related all he had seen to his pious wife, and immediately set to work to carry out his plan.

On Saturday afternoon he himself canvassed for scholars among the brickmakers and labourers of the neighbourhood, while his wife cleared the front room, which served him for a shop, and prepared it for the required purpose. When Sunday morning came, a few children made their appearance, and the school began.

The first scholars were very rough, but were treated with patient kindness, and in a few weeks difficulties were overcome and a school was organized, which he conducted for twenty-eight years in his own dwelling, and which exists, in a building erected to receive it, to the present day.

This work, it should be remembered, was carried on, not by paid teachers, as in the case of the schools established by Robert Raikes and Rowland Hill, but by the voluntary labour of a working man, who appropriated his own house to the purpose, and defrayed the expenses of the movement in its early stages, unaided and alone.

The year 1784 saw also the birth of the celebrated Stockport school, which has long been known as the largest Sunday school in the world.

The first rules of this institution, published November 11, 1784, provided that "the town should be divided into

six parts; that there should be at least one school in each part; that two subscribers should visit each school, and report to the committee; that the scholars should attend from nine to twelve in the forenoon, and from one to the hour of worship in the afternoon, when their teachers should conduct them to church or chapel, and then return to school again until six o'clock—the teachers to be paid one shilling and sixpence per day; and that the children of Protestant Dissenters should, if possible, have masters of their own persuasion, and choose their own mode of catechizing.”

The present building was erected in 1805, at the cost of £6000, and was designed to accommodate five thousand scholars.

The school, which now contains three hundred teachers, and three thousand six hundred scholars, belongs rather to the town than to any particular church, and whatever objections may at the present day be alleged against this principle of management, there can be no doubt that throughout the hundred years of its existence the Stockport school has rendered immense service to the cause of general and religious education.

If the year 1784 was remarkable for the large number of important Sunday schools established, and the impetus given to the cause by the letters and newspaper articles of Robert Raikes, the following year, besides witnessing many additions to the number of these institutions, was particularly notable in consequence of two circumstances to which allusion will now be made.

#### THE FIRST SUNDAY SCHOOL SOCIETY.

One of these events was the formation of “The Society for the Support and Encouragement of Sunday Schools in the Different Counties of England.”

This society, which for several years helped greatly in

the promotion of the Sunday school movement, originated in a correspondence which took place between William Fox and Robert Raikes, and, after two or three preliminary meetings, was formally established at the King's Head tavern in Cateaton Street, London, on September 7, 1785.

Among the twenty-four gentlemen forming the first committee we find the names of Thomas Boddington, William Fox, Jonas Hanway, Samuel Hoare, Thomas Raikes, a brother of the founder, and many others well known for their devotion to the cause of religious education.

This committee soon set to work, prepared a set of rules, an address to the public, and two or three circulars to ministers and others, giving advice and offering aid towards the accomplishment of the end in view. They also entered into correspondence with some of the dignitaries of the Church, published their replies in commendation of the movement, and inaugurated a fund for giving substantial aid to those who undertook to establish Sunday schools.

At this time it was computed that the number of Sunday scholars in England and Wales amounted to at least 250,000, and the vigorous efforts put forth by this society speedily led to a considerable increase.

The first report of the committee, which was presented at the quarterly meeting held January 11, 1786, stated that "the subscriptions received amounted to £987; that there had been already established five schools in the vicinity of London; and that, in reply to many applications from various parts of the country, the committee had signified their disposition to assist the establishment of schools upon the principles laid down by the society."

One of these rules required the attendance of all the scholars at some place of worship every Sunday, and forbade the teaching of writing on the sabbath. Another

regulation provided that, except in certain exceptional cases, the boys and girls should be taught separately, the boys by men, and the girls by women.

In October, 1786, it was reported that the committee had requested the school managers to keep a register of the names and attendances of the scholars, and transmit the particulars to the committee once a quarter. This was the first attempt to provide Sunday school statistics.

At the general meeting in July, 1787, it was resolved unanimously "that in consideration of the zeal and merits of Robert Raikes, Esq., who may be considered as the original founder as well as a liberal promoter of Sunday schools, he be admitted an honorary member of the society."

This proves that seven years after the establishment of Sunday schools, when all the details were fresh in the memories of Sunday school workers, Raikes was regarded as the indisputable *founder* of the system.

A large sum was expended by the committee in supplying gratuitously Bibles, New Testaments, and spelling-books for use in the schools. Up to the year 1812, the Sunday School Society had distributed gratuitously 800 Bibles, 70,000 New Testaments, and 329,000 spelling-books. But the principal item of expenditure was that devoted to the payment of 1s. or 1s. 6d. per day to the teachers, and which amounted in the year 1789 to more than £500, and in the first twenty-four years of the society's existence, to no less than £4,383.

From and after the year 1811 this expenditure ceased, in consequence of the general adoption of the voluntary principle—a change which not only reduced the expense, but improved the character of Sunday-school teaching, and rendered possible the rapid progress it has since made.

The society continued for many years to make numerous and useful grants of Bibles and class books to needy

schools, till in the year 1864, after a useful career of seventy-nine years, its affairs were wound up, and its balance transferred to the Sunday School Union.

### VOLUNTARY TEACHERS.

The other noteworthy event of the year 1785 was the formation of the Methodist Sunday school at Oldham, which is said to have been the first in which the employment of unpaid teachers was adopted as a system.

This Sunday school was established in the month of March in this year, at the Old Chapel, Bent Brow, under the following circumstances :—

One night, at a meeting of the class leaders, when the business of the class was over, the subject of Sunday schools was introduced, and formed the general topic of conversation. Some of the class leaders were strongly advocating their utility, and recommending them to the serious consideration of the rest, when it was urged by one of them “that, as they were in so low a condition in a pecuniary point of view (being principally operatives), they could not support paid teachers.” This, which appeared a great obstacle, drew forth from one of the leaders the following plain and homely remark :—“Lads, I’ll tell you what we must do—we must each of us find a teacher, we must all come and try what we can do, and, if you’ll do so, we can have a Sunday school !” This short but emphatic remark made an impression. It commended itself to the approbation of all present ; the impediment seemed to vanish. All with one heart and one mind enrolled themselves as Sunday school teachers, and on the following Sunday one of these benevolent institutions was formed, in which good work the class leaders were soon joined and aided by other members of the society.”

In the course of the same year it is reported, on the authority of John Wesley, that the masters in the Methodist



Sunday school at Bolton also gave their services gratuitously.

It is a somewhat remarkable coincidence that the society which for a long period aided so largely in providing funds for the payment of teachers, and the school which set the example of dispensing with this payment by the adoption of the voluntary principle, should both have been founded in the same year.

In 1785 or 1786 the Rev. Thomas Charles, of Bala, commenced his useful work of establishing Sunday schools in Wales in connection with the day schools, known as *circulating schools* (so called from the circumstance that the schoolmaster, after conducting a school in one locality for a few months, was removed to another district to undertake a similar duty). Mainly through the efforts of Mr. Charles, it was brought about that a Sunday school was made an essential part of the scheme, and when the day school came to an end, the Sunday school was continued, and became a permanent institution.

#### EARLY PATRONS OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

It is not often that new undertakings, however valuable and important they may be, obtain early in their history the countenance and support of those whose positions enable them to do good service to the cause; and, generally speaking, this is a good thing, as early patronage often tends rather to injure than to help.

The Sunday school cause, however, succeeded almost at its very beginning in winning golden opinions and practical aid from people of influence, who rendered considerable service in its rapid extension and development.

As early as July, 1785, at the meeting of the Sunday School Society, it was reported that several members of the committee, accompanied by the Bishop of Salisbury, had been honoured with an interview with the Archbishop of

Canterbury, who said, "That he had had several conversations with the bishops on the subject of Sunday schools, and that at his next visitation he should strongly recommend them in his charge to the clergy." It was also reported "that the Bishop of Salisbury had already established Sunday schools, both in his own diocese and on his temporal estates."

Nor was this favourable opinion confined to the bishops and clergy. An eminent member of the aristocracy, Lord Ducie, observing a number of children in the aisles of his parish church whose silence and good order were most commendable, learned upon inquiry that the children belonged to the Sunday school, and immediately resolved to give the measure all possible encouragement—a resolution to which he steadily adhered.

Lord Mahon, in his "History of England," quotes the testimony of Adam Smith (author of "The Wealth of Nations") to their value, in these remarkable words: "No plan has promised to effect a change of manners with equal ease and simplicity, since the days of the apostles."

John Howard, the eminent philanthropist, writes in the third edition of his work on prisons, in reference to Robert Raikes, "This gentleman is also the founder of a *benevolent and useful institution* for the children of the poor in the city of Gloucester, where he established several little schools for their instruction on Sundays."

Two Christian ladies, of high literary attainment, also rendered service to the cause, not only by writing and speaking in its favour, but by giving practical effect to their opinions. Mrs. Trimmer established a Sunday school at New Brentford, in which, assisted by her family, she instructed some hundreds of children. And Miss Hannah More, who resided on the Mendip Hills, in Somersetshire, commenced the good work in 1789, and in the course of five years in this scattered district she and her sisters had

in regular attendance no less than two hundred children, and as many adult scholars.

In the autograph collection of the late Sir Charles Reed, there is a letter of Robert Raikes to the Rev. Mr. Bowen Thickers, of Ross, Herefordshire, dated June 27, 1788, in which he says, "At Windsor the ladies of fashion pass their Sundays in teaching the poorest children. The Queen sent for me the other day to give her Majesty an account of the effect observable on the manners of the poor, and her Majesty most graciously said that she envied those who had the power of doing good by thus personally promoting the welfare of society in giving instruction in morals to the general mass of the people—a pleasure from which, by her situation, she was debarred."

From this time forward Queen Charlotte took a lively interest in Sunday schools, and she often conferred with Mrs. Trimmer, respecting the work she was doing at Brentford, and the possibility of establishing similar institutions at Windsor. The king also himself visited Mrs. Trimmer's schools, and won the hearts of the children by his kind condescension.

But perhaps the most enthusiastic testimony in favour of Sunday schools, and the most influential in promoting their establishment, was that of John Wesley, at the time of his visit to Bolton in 1788, which we quote at length from the fourth volume of his diary.

"*Saturday, April 19, 1788.*—We went on to Bolton, where I preached in the evening in one of the most elegant houses in the kingdom, and to one of the liveliest congregations. And this I must avow, there is not such a set of singers in any of the Methodist congregations in the three kingdoms. There cannot be, for we have near a hundred such trebles, boys and girls selected out of our Sunday schools and accurately taught, as are not found together in any chapel, cathedral, or music-room within the four seas. Besides, the spirit with which they all sing, and the

beauty of many of them, so suits the melody that I defy any one to exceed it, except the singing of angels in our Father's house.

"*Sunday, 20th.*—At eight and one the house was thoroughly filled. About three I met between nine and ten hundred of the children belonging to our Sunday schools. I never saw such a sight before. They were all exactly clean, as well as plain in their apparel. All were serious and well behaved. Many, both boys and girls, had as beautiful faces as I believe England or Europe can afford. When they all sang together, none of them out of tune, the melody was beyond that of any theatre; and, what is best of all, many of them truly fear God, and some rejoice in His salvation."

It is quite certain that these favourable testimonies to the value and importance of Sunday-school teaching had an immense influence in helping forward the new-born extension, and preparing for it the almost universal influence which it has since secured.

#### PROGRESS OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS IN AMERICA.

American Christians, soon after the conclusion of the War of Independence, began to follow the example set them in the old country, and though at first they progressed but slowly, they have gradually reached a position equal, if not superior, to the highest development attained by our English schools.

In 1786 Bishop Asbury, the patriarch of American Methodism, established a Sunday school in Hanover County, Virginia.

In 1787 George Daughaday, a Methodist preacher, was drenched with water from a public cistern in Charleston, South Carolina, for the crime of conducting a Sunday school for African children.

In 1790 the Methodist Conference meeting at Charles-

ton resolved to establish Sunday schools both for the blacks and the whites, and in December of this same year the first Day School Society was established at Philadelphia, Bishop White of the Protestant Episcopal Church being appointed president, and its first school was opened for the admission of children in March, 1791.

In the same year the first Sunday school in Ohio was formed by Mrs. Mary Lake, who, with her two sons, gathered together the children in the Stockade Fort known as "Campus Martius," at Marietta, and taught the scholars to repeat verses from the Bible, and answers from a catechism.

During this year also (1791) the first Sunday school in New York, which was chiefly devoted to purposes of secular instruction, was established, and in 1793, Katy Ferguson, a poor African woman, opened the second Sunday school in this city, for the spiritual instruction of the children of her own people.

In 1803 Mr. and Mrs. Bethune, who had spent part of the two previous years in England, and had observed the progress of Sunday schools there, opened a third Sunday school in New York, in which they were assisted by their pious mother, Mrs. Isabella Graham; and shortly afterwards, two other schools were formed in other parts of the city by the same persons.

In 1809 a Sunday school for religious instruction was instituted at Pittsburg, which is said to have coincided in its principal features with the Sunday schools of the present day.

#### ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION.

Recrossing the Atlantic, we find at the beginning of the nineteenth century that the Sunday-school cause was rapidly extending throughout the United Kingdom, and that the number of scholars under instruction could not then have

been less than between three and four hundred thousand ; but as to the details of their management, and the measure of their efficiency, very little is known.

In a large number of schools, the system of voluntary teachers had taken firm root, and had doubtless both increased the number of the scholars and improved the character of the teaching ; but many schools were still staggering under the incubus of paid teachers and unpractical committees, which tended to secularize their proceedings, and hindered greatly the development of the Sunday school as a religious institution.

The paid teachers would be too apt to do just what was needed to secure their salaries, and as little as possible besides.

In a school which had been established at Walworth, the teacher was paid at the rate of one penny per scholar, with the proviso that, however many his school contained, he should never receive more than half a crown. The result was that he always managed to have just thirty scholars, and *no more*. If the number went down to twenty-eight or twenty-nine, one of the children was sent out to get in another scholar or two, to make up enough to secure his weekly two shillings and sixpence.

When this teacher was dismissed, and the school was taken up by Joseph Fox, William Brodie Gurney, and other gratuitous teachers, the number soon increased to a hundred and eighty.

Even the working of the Sunday School Society, by its free grants of books and its money payments to teachers, greatly as it had helped the institution in its early stages, was in some danger of checking the springs of Christian benevolence, personal effort, and church responsibility for the instruction of the young.

While books could be had for the asking, and money was provided to pay for teachers, churches would not be stimulated, or volunteers be forthcoming to undertake the work.

Indeed, up to this time, with certain noble exceptions, one school in a district was thought sufficient for several congregations, or in some cases a girls' school would be connected with one place of worship, and a boys' school with another place in the neighbourhood, instead of each congregation having a Sunday school of its own. In fact, there was at this period a great necessity for some movement which should stimulate the churches to adopt the institution as their own special work, and which should at the same time unite the newly constituted fellowship of voluntary teachers in vigorous and combined efforts for the extension and improvement of the Sunday-school system, and the creation of a Sunday-school literature.

This great want of the times was supplied by the establishment of the Sunday School Union, at a meeting held in Surrey Chapel schoolroom, July 13, 1803, Mr. William Marriott, superintendent of Friars Mount Sunday School, Bethnal Green, being appointed treasurer, and Mr. William Brodie Gurney, secretary.

A committee, elected to carry out the objects of the society, proceeded to prepare and publish—"A Plan for the Establishment and Regulation of Sunday Schools;" "An Introduction to Reading, in two parts;" "A Catechism in verse, entitled, 'Milk for Babes;'" and "A Select List of Scriptures for a Course of Reading in Sunday Schools."

This last-named publication was the actual commencement of the uniform lesson system, which has gradually extended until it has become all but universal, and has culminated in "The International List of Scripture Lessons." But the publication of Sunday-school books and papers was at the beginning the smallest part of the Union's operations. Its chief work was the extension of Sunday schools through the agency of ministers and churches, and the improvement of the voluntary teachers engaged in the cause.

The reports read, and discussions carried on at the

quarterly meetings, and the annual sermons preached to the members of the Union, did a good work in exciting attention, encouraging and instructing teachers, and led to the establishment of many new schools, as well as to the improvement of existing ones.

In the year 1812 the custom was introduced of inviting the teachers and friends of Sunday schools to a public breakfast, at which the annual report of the Union was read, and speeches delivered by ministers of the different denominations.

On the morning of May 13 in this year, the first of these meetings was held in the New London Tavern, Cheapside, and was addressed by the Revs. T. H. Horne, Legh Richmond, Thomas James, and Alexander Fletcher.

These meetings were continued for twenty years, being held after the first three or four years in the City of London Tavern, in Bishopsgate Street, and they certainly exerted a powerful influence on the Sunday school cause in the metropolis. The time for breakfast was six o'clock, but the anxiety to be present rendered it necessary to anticipate the hour, and sometimes so great a crowd had assembled round the doors of the tavern that it became necessary to throw them open, and before six o'clock the breakfast was disposed of, and the audience ready for the commencement of the meeting.

These gatherings, with the earnest speeches that were delivered, followed up as they were with long-continued and persevering efforts to promote the good cause by the visitation of the schools, the establishment of libraries, the formation of training-classes, and other practical measures, slowly but surely availed to raise the position and increase the usefulness of Sunday schools.

Indeed, whether we look at the practical measures adopted, or the earnestness and intelligence of the men by whom they were carried out, we find it impossible to wonder at the success which has followed.



A secretariat which successively included such names as William Brodie Gurney, William Freeman Lloyd, Henry Althans, William Henry Watson, Peter Jackson, Robert Latter, and William Groser, and a committee which numbered in its ranks such men as William Gover, R. N. Collins, John Stoneman, William Morrish, and Francis Cuthbertson, could not fail to leave its mark on the generation which it served.

Time and space will not permit us to point out the many ways in which the influence of the Union has been successfully exerted on behalf of the Sunday-school cause during the eighty years of its existence, and those who wish to trace its history and work will do well to consult the interesting volume compiled by the late senior secretary, W. H. Watson. Meanwhile, its surest record is on high.

### THE SUNDAY SCHOOL JUBILEE.

The Sunday School Jubilee, which was celebrated in September, 1831, originated in a letter addressed to Mr. W. F. Lloyd by the poet, James Montgomery, dated December 11, 1829, in which he says, "It has occurred to me that a *Sunday School Jubilee* in the year 1831 (fifty years from the origin) might be the means of extraordinary and happy excitement to the public mind in favour of these institutions, of which there was never more need than at this time."

In February, 1831, a notice appeared in the *Sunday School Teachers' Magazine*, bearing the honoured signature of William H. Watson, communicating the plan recommended by the committee of the Union for the celebration of the Jubilee, as follows:—

"That the Sunday School Jubilee should be held on Wednesday, September 14, 1831, Mr. Raikes's birthday.

"That in the morning at seven a prayer-meeting of Sunday-school teachers should take place, either a united

one or in each individual school, as may be thought advisable.

“That at eleven the children in the schools connected with the Auxiliary and Country Unions be assembled for public worship.

“That at six a public meeting be held at Exeter Hall, for the teachers of London and its vicinity; and that public meetings be held at the same time in each of the country unions.

“That a collection be made at the public meetings for the benevolent fund of the Sunday School Union, for the purpose of raising £10,000.

“That two resolutions be prepared to be submitted to the public meetings.

“That Mr. Montgomery be requested to write two hymns for teachers, and one for children, to be sung on the above occasions.”

These proposals were subjected to careful consideration, but in the main were heartily and all but universally adopted throughout the United Kingdom.

Mr. Montgomery responded to the request to write the hymns; and an additional hymn for scholars was written by Mrs. Gilbert, better known by her maiden name of Ann Taylor.

Two hymns, with a portrait of Robert Raikes, were engraved on steel, and had a very large circulation. Medals were also struck in commemoration of the occasion, and Mrs. Copley prepared a sketch of the history of Sunday schools, adapted to the perusal of children.

The profits arising from the sale of these publications wholly defrayed the large expenses which the committee incurred in the celebrations, leaving the whole of the Jubilee offerings to be applied in aiding the erection of schoolrooms throughout the country.

The 14th of September, 1831, was a day of holy excitement and pleasure to many thousands of teachers and

scholars all over the country, and some now living look back upon its proceedings with gratitude and joy.

Early morning prayer-meetings of teachers were held, and crowded assemblies of scholars were gathered together to listen to suitable addresses, and unite in singing their Jubilee hymn—

“Hosanna be the children’s song  
To Christ, the children’s King;  
This is the children’s jubilee,  
Let all the children sing.”

Between four and five thousand scholars were assembled in Exeter Hall, and were addressed by the Rev. Dr. Morrison, from Jeremiah iii. 4.

In the evening the Jubilee meeting of Sunday school teachers was held in the same building. Lord Henley occupied the chair, and the meeting was addressed by J. T. Briscoe, Esq., M.P., and the Revs. John Blackburn, Dr. Cox, Dr. Morrison, and the Poet Montgomery.

A second meeting was held simultaneously in the Lower Hall, and as these two meetings did not suffice to contain the teachers and friends who had come together, a third gathering took place at the Scotch Church in Crown Court, Drury Lane. At these meetings, the Revs. S. Hillyard, R. Vaughan, A. Tidman, T. Binney, Messrs. W. B. Gurney, and Thomas Thompson, with others, took part in the proceedings.

Similar gatherings were held in all the large towns throughout the land; and the anticipations of Mr. Montgomery as to the results of the Sunday School Jubilee were to a considerable extent realized.

Teachers were led to think more highly of their work, while the Church was induced to form a more correct estimate of the importance of these institutions. One of the results of the movement was that the committee of the Union, on whom had fallen so much of the labour

of making the necessary arrangements, were themselves stimulated to greater zeal and energy in the prosecution of their work.

One of the earliest fruits of the Jubilee was the establishment, in 1833, of the library and reading-room, which has ever since been carried on for the benefit of Sunday-school teachers, and which has been the fruitful parent of many similar schemes for their improvement.

### SUNDAY SCHOOL BUILDINGS.

Having thus briefly traced the progress of Sunday schools during the early years of their existence and recounted the proceedings connected with the jubilee, it will perhaps be better to complete this epitome of their history topically rather than chronologically, and one of the first points claiming attention relates to the buildings in which they have been conducted.

While they were taught by paid teachers they were usually held as a matter of convenience, in a room of the teacher's own house, and the cottage in which it is believed the first Sunday school was established by Raikes is still standing in St. Catherine Street, Gloucester.

Sometimes it was possible to obtain the use of a public building, as at Oldham, where the Grammar School was secured for the purpose. In many cases the Sunday school was held in the chapel. Surrey Chapel, for instance, though quite new when the school was started, was so used for twenty years.

In some places—notably in Manchester—such difficulty was met with in obtaining suitable buildings that the large rooms connected with public-houses were engaged for the purpose of Sunday-school instruction. Sometimes the vestry of the church or chapel, the study of the minister, or the kitchen of the founder was the place of meeting.

Gradually, as British schools and National schools came into existence, these buildings were appropriated to Sunday school purposes, and for many years either the day schools or the chapels were almost the only places which could be obtained for religious instruction on the Sabbath day.

One of the earliest buildings erected for the special purpose of a Sunday school was built at Tadcaster in 1788, and is still standing.

Surrey Chapel Sunday School, Stockport Sunday School, and several others, were erected at the commencement of the nineteenth century, and as time rolled on the Churches came to see the advantage and even necessity of erecting buildings specially adapted to the requirements of the Sunday school.

In London and in some parts of the country, more particularly in the manufacturing districts, there are now Sunday-school buildings to be found thoroughly suited for their purpose, containing class-rooms for infant and senior scholars, accommodation for the library and for the officers, and all that is necessary for the pleasant and efficient prosecution of the work of religious instruction.

England, however, is far behind America in this important particular, large numbers of Sunday schools in the United States being not only well adapted to their purpose, but really elegant and attractive buildings, frequently having carpeted floors, and sometimes being ornamented with painted windows, flowing fountains, and beautiful flowers.

It is not at all unusual for American Christians to spend at least as much on the Sunday school as on the church, and as a natural effect the Sunday school draws into its ranks a much larger proportion of the upper classes of society than our English schools.

Nor are the handsome buildings confined to the schools of the church and congregation. In many cases the mission schools are equally beautiful and costly, with the design of

attracting the children of the poorer classes, and making them feel that the Sunday school is a pleasant place in which to spend a portion of the Sabbath day.

When the congregation of the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher were about to erect their mission school at Brooklyn, the pastor said, "Let us build at least as beautiful and commodious a school for the children of the poor as we have provided for our own children," and his advice was literally followed.

While it may be impracticable even if desirable in England to go so far in this direction, there is certainly abundant room for improvement. Some of our Sunday schoolrooms are thoroughly unworthy of the important purpose they serve, and if ever the work of religious instruction is to take the high place which it should occupy amidst the institutions of the Church, better school buildings, more comfortable and attractive, and with plenty of class-rooms, must be liberally provided.

### RAGGED SCHOOLS.

Another subject claiming attention relates to the class of society from which our Sunday scholars are drawn. There can be no doubt that the first scholars of Raikes belonged to the very lowest grade, and most, if not all, of the early schools were intended for the poorest and most ignorant class of the community; but gradually the children of the middle classes found their way into the Sunday school in constantly increasing numbers, until at last it came to be an acknowledged fact that a large proportion of those who most needed Christian instruction and influence, especially among the crowded populations of our large cities and towns, were left outside the institution originally intended for their benefit. Hence arose the necessity for the establishment of schools especially intended for ragged and destitute children.

Among the earliest of these schools, most of which combined Sunday and week-day instruction, was the one established in 1835 in Gray's Yard, London, which was called a "Free School," and others were started shortly after by Miss Howell, chiefly in Westminster, which were styled "Schools for the Destitute." In 1844, when the Ragged School Union was originated, it appeared that there were twenty of these institutions in London, and the number went on increasing so rapidly that in a few years there was hardly a district in the metropolis or any large provincial town which did not possess its ragged school. Many such schools were originated by persons in an obscure position in life. The ragged schools at Portsmouth were established by John Pounds, who is generally accepted as the founder of ragged schools. He used to teach with pieces of paper torn from the hoardings. A cobbler started one of these schools in Kent Street, a tinker the one at Hatcham, and a chimney-sweep the one at Windsor. Many others were set on foot by the liberality of private persons and through the exertions of the Ragged School Union.

This excellent society, with its late philanthropic and energetic president, Lord Shaftesbury, has contributed largely not only to the extension, but to the financial support of these useful institutions during the last forty years.

The spread of day-school education and the operation of the compulsory clauses of the Elementary Education Act of 1870 are gradually superseding the week-day teaching of the ragged school, though there is still abundant opportunity for the conduct of evening classes for young people whose educational advantages have been small or altogether neglected. Whether the ragged school is destined to become a permanent institution, or whether it shall be ultimately absorbed in the ordinary Sunday school, together with the manifold works of usefulness which

have gathered around it, is impossible to foretell ; but certainly at present its operations are indispensable and richly deserving of liberal support.

#### SCHOLARS OF HIGHER SOCIAL GRADE.

But though the Sunday school has succeeded in drawing within its influence the bulk of the children of the middle classes, while the ragged schools and the branch or mission schools established by many of our churches have brought a considerable portion of the lowest classes under their charge, a large number of the children of the highest section of the middle class, and nearly all those belonging to the upper ten thousand are altogether outside the range of Sunday-school instruction, and, it is to be feared, not well provided with the means of religious culture.

The establishment of drawing-room classes, such as that conducted for several years by Dr. J. H. Gladstone, and the good example set by some families who pride themselves more on consistency than on high position, are doing something to improve the condition of things ; but in this respect we are still a long way behind the American Sunday schools, which largely comprise the children of the most wealthy and educated classes of society.

In *The Sabbath School Index*, Mr. R. G. Pardee, of New York, refers to a lengthened interview which he had with the late Rev. Dr. Lyman Beecher, upon this subject. "Our conversation," he says, "turned upon that unfortunate feature of the cause in England which virtually excluded all the better-to-do children of that country. Dr. Beecher's eye lit up at once, and with great animation, as he said to me : 'It was the same here at first, and I do not know but I had an important hand in producing the change. I saw the tendency of things, and feared that our Sunday schools would result in a failure if only the poor children gained the benefit of them in this land, and it



troubled me for some year or two. At last, I resolved to overthrow that system, and went and called upon Judge W——, one of my most influential men, and said, “Judge W——, I want you to bring your children to Sunday school next Sabbath.” “*Me!*” exclaimed the judge in amazement. “Yes, you,” calmly responded Dr. Beecher. “I have made up my mind to take *my children*, and I want you and a few others of the best families to popularize the thing.” A little explanation secured the object. I then called upon Mrs. S——, the most aristocratic lady in the community, and said, “Mrs. S——, I want you to lead *your two daughters* into our Sunday school next Sabbath;” and, said the doctor, ‘Mrs. S—— almost shouted in astonishment; but a more particular and careful explanation than sufficed with Judge W—— succeeded here; and then the family of the first physician was in like manner secured, and we all turned our labour and influence on the Sunday-school movement, and it gave an unheard-of impetus to our Sunday school, and by means of the press, and by letters and personal conversation, the facts became known, and met with almost universal approval and adoption in our country, and the reform soon became complete.’”

Thus by means of their Church or Congregational Schools, and their Branch or Mission Schools, all classes of society in America are provided with the opportunities of religious instruction; and the sooner the English system approximates to the American in these particulars the better it will be for our young people, and the higher will be the position which the institution will attain.

#### INFANT CLASSES.

The subject of infant classes is the next point to which attention is invited.

The establishment of infant schools in the year 1820

speedily directed the attention of Sunday-school teachers to the importance of effecting some improvement in the conduct of that noisy but then necessary appendage, the alphabet class; and gradually the plan was adopted of erecting a gallery, or series of raised seats, for the younger children, and teaching them by means of large-type lesson-papers and pictures instead of in the old-fashioned and inefficient style.

The example of Mr. Morrish in teaching the infants of Paddington Chapel Sunday School by means of a box of letters, led to the preparation and sale of similar boxes by the committee of the Sunday School Union in the year 1842, which were largely distributed through the country.

A further stimulus was given to this interesting department of Sunday-school work, by the publication, in 1851, of the late Sir Charles Reed's prize essay on infant classes, and the continuous advocacy by himself and his coadjutors of the Sunday School Union in support of the system.

These persistent efforts have led to the establishment of the infant class as a permanent appendage to the Sunday school, and large numbers of loving-hearted teachers are now engaged, with the aid of the letter box, the blackboard, and the numerous scripture prints provided for their use, in making the infant class one of the happiest and most useful classes throughout the whole school.

#### ELDER SCHOLARS.

The progress made in the retention of the elder scholars is another subject deserving attention.

The report of the American Sunday School Union for 1826 stated, that in a few of their schools Bible-classes had been formed for young persons who had become too old willingly to submit to the usual exercises, in which they might yet receive the benefit and be subject to the restraints

of religious instruction; and in the *Teacher's Magazine* for 1827, a plan was suggested for the establishment of senior and adult classes.

The attention thus drawn to the subject was further stimulated by the Parliamentary returns published in 1835, which made known the large variation in the percentage of Sunday scholars to the population in different parts of the country, and called attention to the fact that wherever senior and adult classes were provided young people, instead of leaving the school as they usually did at the age of fourteen or fifteen, could be retained under the influence of their teachers until a much later age. The committee of the Sunday School Union, in their report for 1836, earnestly appealed to their fellow-labourers and to Christian ministers on behalf of their grown-up scholars, urging their retention under the care of intelligent and affectionate teachers in separate rooms, in which they could be treated rather as friends than as scholars, and, "like the ancient catechumens, trained up for membership in the Christian church."

The persistency with which the committee of the Union followed up this appeal, aided by the publication of an address by Mr. Watson on senior classes, and subsequently of the prize essay on the same subject by Mr. J. A. Cooper, of Birmingham, led to the rapid establishment of these classes, especially in the manufacturing districts of England, and called forth the enthusiastic approval of Mr. Horace Mann, in his admirable report on the educational census of 1851: "The senior class is the grand desideratum to the perfect working of the Sunday-school system, for without some such means of continuous instruction, and maintaining influence when the scholar enters the most critical period of life, the chances are that what has been already done will prove to have been done in vain."

At the present time about one-fifth of the scholars in the Sunday schools connected with the Union are above

fifteen years of age, though the proportion in London schools is much smaller than in many parts of the country.

The senior classes of America succeed in retaining a still larger proportion of elder scholars, chiefly because the two essential requisites are more liberally provided. They have, on the one hand, more attractive class-rooms, and plenty of them; on the other hand, an ample supply of intelligent and experienced teachers willing to undertake this important work.

Similar advantages in England would speedily lead to a large extension of this important department of Sunday-school work, and a blessed increase in the spiritual results of the Sunday-school enterprise.

#### LIBRARIES.

Another question intimately associated with Sunday-school progress relates to that useful appendage to the teacher's work—the lending library.

One of the earliest facts known in connection with this subject is contained in the following communication from the Rev. H. C. Trumbull, the able editor of the *American Sunday School Times*:—"As early as 1792, the first day school society of Philadelphia voted the sum of ten pounds to be laid out in small moral books, to be lent to the scholars, or given as premiums to the most deserving."

By slow degrees this example was followed both in America and in this country; but in 1833, according to the Parliamentary returns, not more than one-eighth or one-tenth of the Sunday schools in England and Wales had lending libraries for the benefit of the scholars connected with them.

When this fact was made known, the committee of the Sunday School Union at once set to work to prepare a catalogue of suitable books, and to offer them to the conductors of Sunday schools at greatly reduced prices.

This useful work has been continued to the present time. The catalogue, which in 1837 contained 353 volumes, now contains 1500, and there are but very few Sunday schools which do not possess a more or less extensive library, by means of which the teachers are able both to render their sabbath instructions more effective, and to supplement those instructions by providing suitable week-day reading for their scholars at home.

In the schools of America an equal, if not greater, degree of attention is paid to this important subject, and some of the libraries in connection with the larger schools are very extensive and admirably conducted.

#### THE SCHOOL AND THE CHURCH.

The relation which the Sunday school has sustained to the Christian church is another interesting point of inquiry.

The original Gloucester schools, and most of their immediate successors, like the ragged schools of the present day, had no direct connection with any particular church, but were under the control of individual Christians or combinations of Christian people belonging to various churches.

Very soon, however, the ministers and members of particular churches began to establish schools of their own, and gradually it came to pass that every congregation felt its responsibility to take a part in the religious education of the young by adopting the Sunday school as one of its own institutions. There can be no doubt that the more closely the connection of the church with the school has been kept up the greater has been the prosperity enjoyed. The Sunday-school work is the work of the church, and not simply the work of the band of teachers employed. On the church rests the obligation to maintain the school in efficiency by a liberal supply of well-qualified

agency, suitable accommodation, and pecuniary aid; and to the church belongs the right of exercising such control over its operations as may best secure its efficiency as a church institution.

The details of management may safely be left for each church or denomination to settle for itself, and, indeed, considerable variation exists in this particular.

In some cases the officers and teachers, with the minister and deacons or elders of the church, form a committee to make rules and lay down plans for the conduct of the school, and in other cases the church appoints a committee which includes the officers and some of the teachers, to whom similar powers are given.

In some instances the teachers are elected at the church meetings on the nomination of the superintendent or minister, and the names of the school officers, after their annual appointment by the teachers, are submitted to the church for confirmation. When these plans are adopted, and the superintendent or secretary is expected periodically to report to the church meeting the condition and needs of the school, the teachers are more likely to feel the responsibility attaching to their position, the officers to realize the oneness of the church and the school, and the members of the church to evince their hearty co-operation in the work which is being carried on for the benefit of their own children and the young people of the neighbourhood.

Whatever details of management may be adopted, and however varied the methods of co-operation between the church and the school, it is now all but universally admitted that they are not to be regarded as separate and distinct institutions, but as one and indivisible; and that, whatever may in the past have been permitted to interfere with the spirit of harmony and peace, teachers and church members should all be found working together in earnest and loving co-operation for the salvation of the young.

In America the close connection, or rather the essential oneness, of the church and the Sunday school is perhaps still more universally acknowledged and practically manifested than in England.

The large extent to which the children of the church in all grades of society are to be found in the school, the liberal provision made for the comfort of teachers and scholars, and the readiness with which the best talent which the church contains is devoted to the work of instruction, satisfactorily indicate the firm hold which the school has taken on the affection of the church, and sufficiently account for the high position which it has attained and the glorious results which it has achieved.

#### LESSON SYSTEMS.

We shall now endeavour to point out the nature of the instructions imparted to the scholars in our early Sunday schools, and to trace the gradual development of the uniform Scripture-lesson system, culminating in the extensive adoption of the "International Scheme of Lessons."

In the schools established by Robert Raikes, and during the early years of the institution in this country, it was chiefly confined, as already stated, to the lower classes of the community, who were almost entirely uneducated; and little but the most elementary instruction in the art of reading and the simplest explanation of the Bible or the catechism was attempted.

The *shilling-a-day teachers* were not, indeed, capable of much more than this, and even when the difficulty of finding the means of paying these educational pioneers led to the proposal, "Let us do it ourselves," the qualifications brought to bear upon the work were not of a very high order; so that, except in a few isolated instances, very little of system and method appear to have found their

way into the Sunday school during the first twenty or thirty years of its existence.

The society founded by Mr. Fox, for the establishment and support of Sunday schools, supplied Bibles and Testaments for those who could read, and spelling-books in large numbers for those who could not, but scarcely anything was attempted in the preparation of books and helps for teachers and scholars until the establishment of the Sunday School Union in 1803. One of the earliest publications of this society was "A select list of Scriptures, designed as a guide to teachers for a course of reading in the Sunday schools." This, however, was only used in a small number of classes, and for many years such was the low state of education, and so high was the price of the Bible, that the principal publications circulated by the Union consisted of spelling-books, catechisms, and large-type lessons, printed on sheets and pasted on boards, for *collective teaching*—a considerable impetus having been given to this system, as opposed to individual teaching, by the discussion of the new modes of instruction introduced into day schools by Mr. Joseph Lancaster. Reading books (Part I. and II.), consisting entirely of extracts from the sacred Scriptures, were published by the Union in 1818 and 1824, and these were for many years largely used as substitutes for the Bible itself.

In 1829 a series of meetings inaugurated by the committee of the Union was held in the metropolis, at which Mr. James Gall, of Edinburgh (who has recently died at the venerable age of ninety-one), explained and illustrated his system of teaching, commonly called the "lesson system." This system, which is fully described in his work entitled "The End and Essence of Sunday School Teaching," required the use of a series of initiatory catechisms, questions, and exercises by the scholars, and of keys and helps by the teachers; but its chief excellencies consisted in the adoption of a graduated series of exercises,



the thorough use of the interrogative method of teaching, and the persistent enforcement of the practical lessons which the biographies and narratives of the Bible inculcate. It does not appear that the books and appliances of Mr. Gall ever came into general use in England, but it is indisputable that a widespread influence for good was exerted by his efforts, not only upon the teachers of London, but through the medium of the agents and publications of the Union upon the Sunday school cause at large.

Among other results of the movement, the committee of the Union were led to prepare and publish, upon a system of progressive elementary instruction adapted to Sunday schools, a series of three class-books, consisting of Scripture facts and truths in common household language, together with question-books for the use of teachers, which for many years had a very extensive circulation, and did good service to the Sunday-school cause, pending the arrival of the era of cheap Bibles and uniform Scripture lessons.

A reference must here be made to the admirable system upon which the Rev. Daniel Gunn conducted his Sunday school at Christchurch, in Hampshire, for many years. Mr. Henry Althans, a former secretary of the Sunday School Union, and one of the most earnest and efficient workers in the east of London, was deputed by the committee to visit the Christchurch School, and report upon the plans adopted, which he did in July, 1830. From his report it appears that Mr. Gunn was in the habit of preparing every week a Bible lesson, which he explained and illustrated to the teachers at the close of the afternoon school so thoroughly as to enable them to teach it on the following Sunday to their respective classes; he himself examining the children at the close of the lesson as to the instruction which they had received.

This plan, which was regularly pursued from the year

1816 until his death, rendered the Christchurch school one of the most efficient and useful in the country, combining some of the best features of the more advanced Bible schools of the present day.

From a very early date, however, teachers of more than average intelligence who were able to obtain Bibles for the use of their scholars were in the habit of arranging, with more or less completeness, courses of reading for their classes, and in some cases these arrangements were extended to other classes in the school; but the earliest list of lessons for a complete year which has been preserved was compiled for the use of the Albion Street Methodist School, Hull, and appears in the *Sunday School Teachers' Magazine* for 1824.

The first attempt to supply regular lessons, with notes for the use of teachers, was made in the same journal in 1830, commencing in January, and proceeding month by month to the end of the year. These notes were very brief, and were not continued in future years.

In many other schools, or groups of schools, individual ministers or teachers exerted a powerful influence for good in promoting uniform Scripture teaching throughout the various classes. In a school with which the writer was connected in 1835, a course of lessons was prepared by one of the teachers, who also wrote out in a memorandum book a series of hints and explanations to aid in the work of teaching, and these notes were copied into other books by some of the young people, so that each of the Scripture class teachers was provided with a copy for use among his own scholars, to the great advantage of all.

Previous to the year 1840, however, little had been done to extend the uniform lesson beyond the Bible classes of a single school except in the case of two or three associations, such as the Silver Street Sunday School Society and the Southwark Sunday School Society, each of which had prepared series of lessons for their associated schools.

## UNIFORM LESSONS IN ENGLAND.

The first list of lessons published with a view to general adoption was issued by the Sunday School Union for the year 1840, and the series has ever since been continued without intermission, meeting with increasing acceptance year after year. In January, 1842, the Union commenced the publication of the monthly "notes" on the lessons for the use of teachers, which have also been continued with an annually augmenting circulation to the present time.

This sketch would not be complete without an allusion to the late Rev. Robert Mimpriss, one of the earliest pioneers in the work of uniform lessons, who, in or about the year 1844, published his "System of Graduated Simultaneous Instruction" for Sunday schools, consisting of a two years' course of lessons founded on a harmony of the four Gospels. This was really the first attempt to engage the whole school, including the junior classes, upon *one subject*; but it never came into general use, partly from its great expense, and partly from the somewhat objectionable abbreviations in the lower grade lessons, but chiefly from its limited range and want of variety.

In order to complete the Union system, the committee have published, from the year 1855 to the present time, a quarterly "Scripture Lesson Book for Elementary Classes," consisting of a few verses selected from the Bible lessons of every Sunday, so that, as infant-class texts are regularly selected and printed in large type for the use of the primary classes, all the scholars can be occupied on the same lesson, the hymns sung, the prayers offered, and the closing address or examination can all be brought to bear upon the lesson of the day, and the teachers' meeting or preparation class rendered helpful to all in the schools which adopt the system.

This lesson scheme is carried out with more or less completeness in a large number of the Sunday schools in England, and is generally known as the Uniform Lesson system of the Sunday School Union. Other societies and denominational publishers quickly followed the example of the Union by publishing lists of lessons and notes for the use of Sunday schools ; but as none of them make provision for the junior scholars to be engaged upon the same topic, while many of the scholars are too young or uneducated to read the Bible, the uniformity only extends to the Scripture classes.

In the Sunday schools of the United States "Question-books" on the Gospels and other portions of Scripture were almost universally in use until the year 1866, and, generally speaking, the several classes in the same school were engaged in the study of different parts of the Bible, though as early as 1825 an attempt had been made by the American Sunday School Union to bring about a better state of things, by the publication of a selection of Scripture lessons for Sunday schools, called the "Limited Lesson Scheme," on cards, which was somewhat widely adopted. The scheme was intended to consist of a five years' course, and to include the principal facts and truths of the Bible. A series of question-books was prepared by the Rev. Albert Judson, and though the primary object of the scheme was to restrict the unlimited memorizing of Scripture verses—a practice which had grown into a positive mania—it undoubtedly contained most of the essential elements of the present international system.

The weak feature of the scheme, according to English notions, was the "Question-book," which certainly served to indicate the direction of the teacher's studies, and the subject on which he would need information, but did not furnish those supplies of knowledge which he might lack the means or the time to acquire.

For some reason this Limited Lesson scheme, though

it was popular for a time, and did much to counteract the evil just referred to, did not secure general and permanent adoption, and the real beginning of uniform lessons in the United States was the publication at Chicago, in 1865, of the *North Western Sunday School Teacher's Quarterly*, and in the following year of the monthly magazine, entitled the *Sunday School Teacher*, both under the able editorship of Dr. Vincent, who had then recently returned from the first international Sunday-school convention held in London.

In the journal for 1865 four alternative lesson schemes were submitted, one of which was taken from the London list of lessons, but neither questions nor notes was provided for the use of teachers. In the magazine for 1866 a two years' course of lessons on the life of Jesus was commenced, with notes for teachers, similar to those published by the London Sunday School Union.

The Rev. Simeon Gilbert, in his history of the lesson system, published in 1879, referring to this course of lessons, remarks, "this was the first series of analytical lesson notes, and scholars' papers ever periodically issued in the United States, *if not in the world*," and he could not therefore have been aware that annual lists of lessons of a similar kind, and monthly notes on the lessons for the use of teachers, had been published regularly by the London Sunday School Union for a quarter of a century previously.

In the course of the year 1866, Dr. Vincent became the secretary of the Methodist Episcopal Sunday School Union, and removed to New York, though he continued to prepare the lessons for the *Sunday School Teacher* throughout the year.

Soon afterwards he commenced a fresh series of lessons, called the "Berean Series," which, though designed especially for his own denomination, speedily secured a widespread popularity not confined to that body.

Meanwhile, the Chicago magazine became the *National Sunday School Teacher*, and under the vigorous editorship of Dr. Eggleston its lesson scheme obtained a very extensive circulation, many other periodicals having adopted the lessons, and giving their own expositions thereon.

### THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Mr. B. F. Jacobs, of Chicago, one of the most earnest Sunday-school superintendents and successful lesson-writers in that city, as early as 1867, appears to have conceived the idea of developing the Chicago lesson scheme into a system of uniform lessons, not for a locality or a denomination merely, but for all the schools of America, and, to use his own words, "not for the schools of this country only, but, blessed be God, we hope, for the whole world."

Dr. Eggleston characterized this idea as "a dream of his enthusiastic friend," but so earnestly did Mr. Jacobs urge his plans at various Sunday-school conventions, and especially at the National Convention, held at Newark, in April, 1869, that he succeeded in inducing the superintendents' section to report the formal and emphatic declaration, "That a uniform lesson is essential to the highest success of every school, and that it is practical and desirable to unite all the schools of our whole country upon one and the same series."

In the month of January, 1870, Dr. Vincent addressed a letter to the committee of the Sunday School Union in London, asking them to direct their attention to the getting up of an International list of lessons, and the idea was favourably entertained, and a resolution passed to correspond with Dr. Vincent upon the subject.

The illness and death of the secretary of the publication committee, however, which occurred shortly after the passing of this resolution, interrupted the correspondence,

and led to the exclusively American character of the movement that followed.

Dr. Eggleston soon discovered and acknowledged in the pages of the *Teacher* that Mr. Jacobs' dream was likely to become a reality, but his idea of uniformity seemed to consist in the general adoption of the Chicago series of lessons, and he strongly opposed any arrangement which should lead to the selection of a course of lessons by a committee, or should in any way interfere with his own system.

As, however, there were now several lesson schemes at work, this determination would have prevented the realization of the desired harmony, had not the feeling of the country upon the subject been so strong as to override all opposition, and at the Triennial Sunday School Convention, which assembled at Indianapolis in 1872, after a lengthy and animated discussion, in which Dr. Vincent and Mr. Jacobs took a prominent part, an almost unanimous resolution was passed, appointing a committee to prepare a seven years' course of lessons for the Sunday schools of the United States and Canada.

The lessons prepared by that committee secured at the very beginning of 1873 almost universal acceptance throughout America, and the committee of the London Sunday School Union, after a long conference with Dr. Vincent, adopted the International series as their afternoon lessons from the beginning of 1874, and have ever since co-operated with the lesson committee in the United States in their preparation and issue.

The most hearty good feeling exists between the two committees, and the utmost readiness is manifested on both sides to propose and adopt such suggestions for alteration and improvement as may render the scheme of lessons generally acceptable.

The Wesleyan Sunday School Union entered into the co-partnership in 1880, and though the Church of England

Sunday School Institute at present abstains from doing so, many Church of England schools adopt the system, and the great majority of our English Sunday-school teachers are now engaged upon the same Bible lesson as their brethren and sisters in the United States, in the British colonies, and in many parts of the continent of Europe.

The advantages arising from the adoption of uniform lessons throughout the various classes of a Sunday school have been so long and so widely acknowledged, as to render argument unnecessary; and additional advantages certainly accrue from the almost universal acceptance of one particular series.

Among these advantages may be mentioned the pleasure derivable from a feeling of fellowship in Bible study, with so many thousands of teachers and scholars in all parts of the world; the improvement in lesson helps arising from the application of the many minds of note writers, and Biblical scholars to the same subjects at the same period of time; the possibility of lessening the bitterness of sectarian feeling by the discovery that something is to be said on both sides of all disputed questions; and, above all, the probability amounting almost to a certainty, that the universal attention given to one particular theme, will ensure more thorough and regular preparation on the part of the teachers.

These advantages are surely sufficient to outweigh any superficial outcry against interference with individual liberty, and to suggest the prayer, "God speed the International Lessons."

#### RESULTS OF SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHING.

We must now devote a few paragraphs to specify some of the results which have accrued from the labours of Sunday-school teachers.



1. For many years the Sunday school was the principal instrument in the education of the children of the poor in England, and, meanwhile, it prepared the way and furnished the impetus which has gradually led to the general provision of day school instruction.

The charity schools which existed in the days of Raikes, provided for only a small portion of the children growing up in ignorance, and could do little or nothing to meet the wants of the populous towns and manufacturing districts.

The first school established by John Lancaster was founded in 1798, eighteen years after the Gloucester movement, and the Royal Lancasterian Society which afterwards developed into the British School Society was instituted in 1808; the National School Society being founded in 1811.

3 | As, however, the schools originated and assisted by these societies only came gradually into existence, and up to the year 1834 no assistance was rendered by Government in the work of education, the provision made for daily instruction during the first fifty years of the existence of Sunday schools was lamentably insufficient, and it consequently resulted that a large number of scholars in the Sunday school were almost entirely indebted to that institution for all the education they ever received.

Under these circumstances, it is not to be wondered at that considerable time and attention were given to instruction in the art of reading and writing; nor can this be a subject of regret, inasmuch as the key of knowledge was thereby placed in the children's hands, while at the same time the Bible truths which they learned to read and write were often so effectually impressed on their understanding and memory as to accomplish the spiritual aim which the teacher had in view.

Still, this secular teaching was felt to be a sort of drudgery, and longing aspirations were indulged for the time when the scholars would come to school able to read

the Word of God with fluency, and leaving the whole time at the disposal of the teacher for the work of religious instruction.

Happily, these aspirations are now pretty generally realized, and Sunday school teachers are free to devote their energies to the more important branch of their work, namely, the salvation of the children entrusted to their care.

2. The Sunday school has prepared multitudes of young people for attendance at public worship, greatly to their ultimate advantage.

It has, indeed, been disputed whether this is the general result, and some years ago a clergyman of the Established Church wrote a pamphlet intended to prove the contrary; and from the figures furnished in the census of 1851, he certainly succeeded in showing that in some towns, which had the largest proportion of Sunday scholars, the percentage of attendants at public worship on the census Sunday was less than in other towns which had a smaller proportion of children in the Sunday school.

When, however, the figures came to be examined more closely, it was found that, although in some cases there was a groundwork of truth in the allegation, a wider comparison brought out an opposite conclusion, and that, taking the eight counties which had the largest proportion and the eight counties which had the smallest proportion of Sunday scholars to the population, the advantage was decidedly on the side of the former.

At the same time, it must be freely admitted that large numbers of Sunday scholars have failed to acquire the habit of regular attendance at public worship, and, after leaving the school, have nearly or altogether ceased to attend the house of God.

Such, at least, was the case when the census of Public Worship was taken in the year 1851. On that particular Sunday less than three-fifths of the number who might

have been expected to attend the house of God on some part of the day were found to be present, though probably two-thirds of the population had for a longer or shorter period been Sunday scholars.

Whether any improvement has taken place in this particular since 1851 is uncertain, but the fact is indisputable that a large proportion of the attendants at church and chapel have been taught in the Sunday school, and are thereby fitted to take a more intelligent part in divine worship, and are more likely to profit by the ministry of the Word.

The certainty, however, that so large a number of those who were once under our care are not now to be found in connection with the means of grace is deeply to be regretted, and should stimulate teachers to use every effort to train up their scholars in the habit of regular attendance at the sanctuary, and to retain them in connection with the school until they are brought into full communion with the church of Christ.

3. Many thousands of Sunday scholars have been led, through the instruction and influence of their teachers, to give themselves to the Saviour and unite with the church of Christ.

No regular statistics were collected by the Sunday School Union on this point until 1864; but for many years previous to that period ministers and church officers had reported that the majority of those who became church members had been scholars in the Sunday school, and that large numbers of them had therein received their first religious impressions.

During the twenty-two years from 1864 to 1885 the total number of scholars returned as having joined the churches from the Sunday schools connected with the Union, amounted to more than a quarter of a million, the number in the last-mentioned year having been 15,622.

The proportion of scholars who have thus decided for

Christ to the total number in the connected schools has varied from year to year, the lowest year having been one per cent., and the highest two per cent.

It must not, however, be supposed that these statistics are complete. Some of the schools make no return at all under this head, and many of the returns are known to be inadequate.

It should be remembered, too, that the connection of the scholars with the Sunday school is not for one year only, but averages several years; and also that many of the old scholars join the church after leaving the Sunday school.

Still, when every allowance has been made, it must be admitted that the proportion of Sunday scholars who become church members is far below what could have been expected if teachers were fully alive to their responsibilities, and prayerfully earnest in their endeavours to bring *each* and *all* of their scholars to Jesus as their Saviour, and to the church as their refuge and their home. In the United States the percentage of scholars brought into Christian fellowship is somewhat larger than in England, the returns made to the International Convention in Toronto in 1880, deducting those states which furnished no information under this head, being rather more than two per cent. In some of the states the proportion is much larger, and it is pretty certain that fuller and more accurate statistics would indicate still more gratifying results.

On both sides of the Atlantic, however, the results of Sunday-school instruction in adding members to the church of Christ are sufficient to call for gratitude in relation to the past, and more earnest consecration in the future.

4. The Sunday school has been most successful in preparing a regular supply of Christian workers, both in its own sphere and in every other department of Christian labour.

A large proportion of the ministers and missionaries in connection with all denominations of the Christian church have received their first religious impressions, commenced their Christian work, and exercised their early aspirations for higher service in the Sunday school; and so thoroughly has the institution proved reproductive that nearly all the teachers employed in the work of teaching have come up from the ranks of the scholars.

The last statistical returns published by the Union show that eighty-eight per cent. of the teachers in the connected schools were formerly Sunday scholars.

Can any testimony to the beneficial results of the institution be more valuable and conclusive than this? In their several classes the scholars have learned the value of their own souls and the preciousness of the Saviour; and then, as opportunity has offered, they have come forward to carry on the same work, enlist under the old banner, and show their gratitude for the instruction they have received by trying to influence for good the children of another generation.

#### STATISTICS.

The only remaining topic which calls for consideration relates to the gradual progress and the present magnitude of the Sunday-school cause in our own country and throughout the world.

On three several occasions parliamentary returns have been presented, showing the number of Sunday scholars in England and Wales, and the proportion which they bore to the population, the last inquiry having been made in connection with the census of 1851.

No authoritative statistics have been obtained since that date, as, unfortunately, the Government has not repeated its inquiries into the state of education and public worship in connection with the last three census returns.

An attempt was made in the centenary year, 1880, to estimate the number of Sunday-school teachers and scholars at home and abroad; but, as neither the Church of England nor the Congregationalists had up to that time published any statistics of their Sunday schools, no definite and reliable figures, nothing better indeed than a mere estimate, could be presented.

It was, however, well known that the proportion of scholars to the population had been gradually advancing, particularly in London, where, in 1851, it was very much lower than in other parts of the country; and it was therefore assumed that the proportion had increased from  $13\frac{1}{2}$  to 15 per cent., and report was made accordingly.

Since then the Sunday School Institute has published an estimate of the numbers in Church of England schools, and, though the Congregationalists and some of the smaller religious bodies have not yet done so, sufficient data is now provided for the presentation of a fairly approximate estimate of the number of teachers and scholars in the Sunday schools of England and Wales, which proves conclusively that the totals presented in 1880 were considerably underrated, and that they contained in 1883 no less than 5,200,776 scholars, or more than double the numbers in 1851.

The following table, quoted from "The Sunday School Army," published in 1883, shows the gradual progress which has been made in the efforts put forth to bring the young people of our country under the influence of religious instruction upon the Sabbath day :—

	Teachers.	Scholars.	Proportion of scholars to the population.
1818	Unknown	477,225	4·09 per cent.
1833	"	1,548,890	10·78 "
1851	318,135	2,407,642	13·43 "
1883	593,427	5,200,776	20·00 "

It thus appears that the proportion of Sunday scholars to the population has advanced  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. since the

census of 1851; that while the population has increased less than 50 per cent., the number of scholars in our Sabbath schools has increased 120 per cent., and that now one in every five of the inhabitants of England and Wales is a Sunday scholar.

The progress of the system from the day when Robert Raikes placed the first group of children under the care of Mrs. King, in the small cottage in St. Catherine Street, Gloucester, to the present time has been truly marvellous, and calls forth the irresistible exclamation, "What hath God wrought!"

But it is not only in England and Wales that this satisfactory progress has been made. Scotland, though behind England, has advanced considerably during the last thirty years; and Ireland, taking into account the largeness of its Catholic population, is doing a noble work, as the figures show conclusively that the Protestants are making large provision for their own young people, as well as doing something towards the instruction of their Catholic fellow-subjects.

In the United States, considering the rapid growth and wide dispersion of the population, the progress of Sunday schools has been truly marvellous, and is certainly exerting a mighty influence for good upon that great nation. The report presented by Mr. E. Payson Porter to the International Sunday School Convention at Louisville in 1884, shows a grand total for the United States of more than a million of teachers, and seven and a half millions of scholars.

In the Australian and American colonies the system has taken a firm root; and on the continent of Europe the good work is making gradual but certain progress, and may be confidently expected, in the course of time, to elevate its teeming millions from the depths of superstition and scepticism into which they have fallen.

In the various heathen and Mohamedan countries to

which the missionaries of England and America have gone to plant the gospel banner, the children are not forgotten. Sunday schools are established, and the time is coming when a still larger and ever-increasing attention will be given to these important auxiliaries in the mission field.

The following is a summary of the statistics which have been compiled to show the present magnitude of the Sunday-school enterprise :—

SUMMARY.				Teachers.	Scholars.
England and Wales	...	...	...	593,436	5,200,776
Scotland	...	...	...	53,113	561,262
Ireland	...	...	...	28,155	298,639
Total United Kingdom				674,704	6,060,677
Canada and Newfoundland	...	...	...	45,511	387,966
Anstraliasia	...	...	...	47,765	442,104
Total Greater Britain				767,980	6,890,747
United States of America	...	...	...	1,043,718	7,668,833
European countries	...	...	...	53,054	773,100
In connection with the several					
Missionary Societies	...	...	...	21,404	386,808
Grand total				1,886,156	15,719,488

### FUTURE DEVELOPMENT.

Having thus briefly sketched the history and progress of the Sunday-school enterprise, it will be sufficient to point out, in conclusion, the grounds which exist for the indulgence of a hopeful spirit as to its future development and ever-increasing influence as a permanent institution of the Christian church.

1. It has been conclusively shown that the Sunday school is not a mere temporary makeshift to supply an educational need, but an institution eminently calculated to do the work of the church among the young people of



her own fold, and those who would otherwise remain uninstructed in the things of God.

Though it can never be a sufficient substitute for parental instruction, and though nothing can absolve the Christian parent from the responsibility of training his own children, the Sunday-school teacher has rendered in the past, and will doubtless still more in the future render, essential service in connection with the home and the pulpit in training up the rising generations to love and serve the Lord.

2. The improvement which has taken place in recent years as to the proper relation of the Sunday school to the Christian church, encourages the hope that a more thorough and hearty sympathy will result in a plentiful supply of consecrated talent being furnished to carry on the work of religious instruction with increasing efficiency.

3. The attention now being paid to the provision of suitable buildings and more numerous and attractive classrooms is another hopeful sign, and gives reason to anticipate a large accession to that most important branch of our operations, the senior class system.

4. The provision made for the improvement of teachers, and the manifold helps provided for their benefit, together with the stimulus furnished by the examinations of teachers and scholars, lead to the confident expectation of constantly increasing efficiency on the part of all who are engaged in the work of religious instruction.

5. The gradual increase in the number of adult scholars is another hopeful sign of the times. In Birmingham and elsewhere the early sabbath morning schools for men and women are largely attended and thoroughly well conducted; and in America many of the church members of all ages, in imitation of the Welsh practice, take their seats in the Sunday-school classes, and study together the Word of God.

6. The growing popularity and success of the Sunday

School Continental Mission inspires the hope that the establishment of Sunday schools on the continent of Europe, for Biblical instruction on the Sabbath day, will gradually disperse the superstition and overturn the infidelity which so largely prevail, and train up a race of Sabbath-keepers and Bible students which shall usher in a brighter and more blessed time for France, Germany, and the other nations of the European continent.

Finally, the high character and efficiency which the Sunday school system has attained in the United States of America, and the hearty co-operation which prevails between the Christian workers in the two hemispheres in relation to uniform lessons, simultaneous united prayer, and international normal study, encourage the hope and confident expectation of continued progress and ever-increasing efficiency, until "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

FOUNTAIN J. HARTLEY.

# THE ADVANTAGES OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL SYSTEM.



THE Sunday school has outlived the day when it needed any apologists for its existence. It has proved its right to exist, nay, the necessity for its continuance, by a whole army of witnesses in its favour. Foremost among these, in every age, have been ministers of the gospel, who, by the recollections of their own training in the schools, and by their experience as teachers, have borne willing testimony to the worth of the institution ; and who afterwards have acknowledged the value of this agency of the Church to her development and growth. Christian parents have expressed their indebtedness to the school for the religious instruction their children have there received, and for the interest and sympathy of which they have been the subjects. Then parents, who have been indifferent to their own religious culture and have not been keenly alive to that of their children, have nevertheless recognized in some measure their obligation to the school, for the kindly interest taken in those dear to them. Very often officers and teachers have received encouraging proofs of such gratitude, as parents have realized that the character and conduct of those who were not always angels in the household have greatly improved under the training received at school ; and often where it has found

no opportunity of expression this sense of obligation has existed, and has shown itself indirectly by the punctual and regular attendance of their children, and frequently by the sacrifices made to send them to school clean and appropriately clad. We have known men of immoral lives and with views antagonist to religion most careful that their children should attend Sunday school.

With so much testimony of various kinds in favour of the school it may seem late in the day to urge its advantages; but their entire bearing may, nevertheless, be inadequately realized, and the full purpose and scope of the school may, even now, be not fully understood.

Indeed, it is remarkable that the development of the Sunday-school idea has not kept pace with the progress of the institution among one class of the community; and there will be found among Christians of to-day, and even among those whose sympathies are with the school, if their energies are not employed there, a very narrow and contracted view of its scope and purpose.

It will be best to briefly state the advantages of the Sunday-school system, and then to inquire what classes, if any, it would be well to exclude therefrom.

Briefly stated, the aim of the Sunday school is *the conversion of the young, and the development of Christian character*; or, in other words, *religious training by means of Biblical instruction*.

### RELIGIOUS TRAINING.

The advantage of training children in the truths of Christianity has never been seriously questioned by any class. Those who themselves have experienced the saving power of religion, of course are anxious that children should be brought under its influence; and even those who are hostile to Christianity are ready to acknowledge the value of religious training for the young. A friend of

an avowed sceptic, one of the leading agnostics of his day consulted him as to the bringing up of his children. The father had lost faith in the old religion in which he had himself been trained, and he was anxious for the guidance of this new light. "Oh," said the friend consulted, "by all means teach them the religion of the Bible: it is the finest training possible *for the young*: by-and-by, when they grow up, they will see that it won't do for their enlightened reason and judgment, and they will be sure to throw it off; but meanwhile, as a discipline for their younger years, it will be of great service."

We accept part of the testimony of so unbiased a witness: and whilst the Sunday school recognizes, even more fully, the advantage of early Christian training, it endeavours to influence the heart and life, that the truths taught when young may guide the after life.

Elsewhere in this book it will be shown that the Sunday school is not designed for any one class alone; but here it may be stated that the religious training it affords must be good for all classes. The children of godless parents must, without the influence of the school, grow up without being properly instructed in the truths of God's Word; for it is generally conceded that the reading of the Bible in the day school, without note or comment, except such moral teaching as may be imparted, cannot be said to be religious training in any adequate sense. It is everywhere confessed, with sorrow, that the great bulk of the working classes are not found in churches or chapels on Sunday; and we may be sure that, for the most part, their children receive little or no religious instruction at home. But their parents are willing, and even glad to send them to the Sunday school, where they are taught to become better sons and daughters, as well as their duty to God.

Then parents who are Christians are not slow to perceive the advantages which the Sunday school confers; and, however much time they devote to the religious

instruction of their children, they are glad that their efforts should be supplemented by the Sunday school. As a rule, they have themselves passed through the school, and they retain clear impressions of its pleasantness and usefulness.

Perhaps the chief advantage which the Sunday school offers is the BIBLICAL INSTRUCTION which it affords, and which no other agency can so well supply. It takes children at their earliest years, when their minds are most impressionable and their faculties are awakening. It sows the seed of religious truth, by means of Bible narratives and simple lessons derived from God's Word; and gradually, with advancing years, the children are taught, with more or less system, the greater part of the books of the Bible. With more or less system, it is said, for no one can pretend but that there is great room for improvement both in the method and quality of teaching prevalent in too many schools. This is not the place to urge a uniform system of lessons, nor to enforce the necessity of more thorough preparation on the part of teachers; but be the deficiencies as great as they may be there is no agency supplies as much Biblical instruction as is given even in an indifferent and imperfect Sunday school.

It may be advanced, however, that at no time was there so much intelligent and well-directed Bible teaching as there is to-day, and a marked improvement may still be observed.

Whatever Biblical instruction children may receive, either at home or at the day school, it is advanced and carried on by the Sunday school: if they have been religiously brought up, teachers find them their most apt and interested scholars; if not, teachers must realize how much devolves on them, so that the most may be made of the time during which they have these neglected ones under instruction.

The ADMIXTURE OF CLASSES found in the school has a beneficial effect. It has a tendency to mitigate, if not remove, much of the evils which result from the caste-feeling which fosters in the young, and, alas, too, in adults, so much silly pride. At one time, when the Sunday school was regarded as a place only for the children of needy or irreligious parents, there was a very strong dread of the contamination which would be sure to come from such places. But now as Sunday schools are conducted the admixture of classes has a beneficial effect. Some few parents hold a contrary opinion; they dread the association of their children with those of the poorer classes: sometimes on sanitary, sometimes on moral grounds, and here and again on the score of cleanliness. But for the most part such anticipated objections are imaginary; cases of sickness contracted in the school are of rare occurrence. The association of the scholars is of too short duration, and is under supervision the whole time, so that moral contagion need not be feared. Friendships are not formed among scholars of distinct social grade; and as for objections on the score of cleanliness, it will be rare to find in a well-conducted school any evidence of the striking need of soap and water. The school has a wholesome effect all round; it restrains disorder, suppresses vice, and promotes tidiness and cleanliness. The whole tone of the school is an elevating one; and all classes share in the leavening process. The mixture of classes to the extent in which it exists in the school has many advantages. It promotes kindly feeling between class and class; the children of the well-to-do learn to sympathize with those whose parents have such a struggle for existence; they hear of sickness, privation, and poverty, patiently borne; they come to know sometimes that want of clothes keeps some of their class-mates from school, and many a first outgoing of the heart towards human woe has been prompted in the class. Then the courteous and kindly behaviour of those who

have been reared in comfort, towards their poorer classmates, has a very humanizing and elevating influence. These latter get to see that wealth and the comforts of life need not harden the heart against the poor; and more favoured ones learn to respect and to regard those whom inferior clothes and a lowlier station do not prevent from showing urbanity and kindness. In view of the, we fear, ever-widening gulf which is separating capital from labour, and class from class, there is nothing so likely to soften asperities, and promote a kindly regard between those whom the circumstances of life have set so far apart, as the association and humanizing influence of the earlier mingling together in the same class in the Sunday school.

In every age since Sunday schools were established the importance of a knowledge of the Word of God among the young has been recognized; but surely it was never so important as to-day, when the inspiration of the Bible is impugned, its Divine origin questioned, its value as a guide for human life denied, and its revelation of another world after death ridiculed. Whatever value works of evidences of Christianity may have for polemical purposes, and without discouraging their study by young people, it will hardly be denied that the Bible is its own evidence, and that the greatest protection which the young can have against scepticism and unbelief in whatever guise, is a thorough acquaintance with the Bible, and an earnest and persistent inculcation of the principles which it teaches.

It must be a considerable advantage for ministers that they can feel that a ground-work of religious instruction is laid in the minds of the young; for although many—alas that there should be so many!—are lost between the school and the Church, there are still a large number who pass into the Church and become its most intelligent and useful members. It must be an immense gain to the



Church that those who are to become its prominent members and office-bearers have passed through some years of religious training in the school.

#### DISCIPLINE OF THE SCHOOL.

Nor is this all: they have not only been religiously trained, but in the *school*; and the term implies regulation, discipline, and obedience, however imperfectly these are enforced in some schools. We know all that can be urged against laxity and indifference; we are painfully aware of the contrast which some schools afford to well-regulated day schools; we are quite familiar with the type of teacher who is irregular and unmethodical, and whose class is ill managed: but, in spite of all shortcomings and defects, the importance of the good qualities mentioned is generally recognized in many, and in a largely increasing number of schools they are observed. We are not now considering the value of these to the school, but to the scholars: to the former they are all important, and to the latter, also, they are of great advantage. They are valuable especially to that large class coming from homes that are not well regulated and conducted; where the father goes to work before the children are up, and comes home after they have gone to bed; where often the mother, too, is away during the day, supplementing the scanty income of the household. Thus left, is it a wonder that the children are untutored and undisciplined? and should it be a matter of surprise that they should often prove rude, disrespectful, and unmanageable under the restraint of the Sunday school and in the hands of teachers, whom they so seldom see, and who may be excused if they do not employ the wisest methods in dealing with such unpromising material? But even on such, patience and love—manifest at length even to hearts so irresponsive to the appeal of affection,—not to

say tact and judicious dealing, have their influence; and when such is the case, nothing short of a reformation of conduct, at all events, is the result. Most schools bear such trophies on their records.

But in classes higher in the social scale, and subject to wiser influences at home and at school, there is an impatience of control, an assertion of independence, and, it must be owned, a growing irreverence and disrespect for age and authority that are pregnant for evil unless checked. To such the discipline and restraint of the Sunday school are likely to be useful. Punctuality, obedience, conformity to school regulation, the manifest care and regard of the teacher for the class irrespective of social position, are all salutary and valuable. And here, too, the admixture of classes is useful: whilst the less favoured are often checked and helped by the more courteous and respectful behaviour of those above them, the scholars from whom more is expected from the advantages of their training are sometimes restrained, and made ashamed, if the comparison has to be forced home by the teacher, by the better conduct of those below them in social position.

There is little danger of the discipline of the school becoming too severe—the danger is rather in the other direction,—but scholars who are at all capable of reflection must see that the comfort and happiness of the scholar, no less than the progress of the school, depend upon the maintenance of order. If that be easily secured, and prompt obedience obtained, the tone of the school should be one of a joyous freedom rather than of strict discipline. The Sunday school would do well to copy much from the day school, but there will be always a difference in the moral atmosphere and feeling pervading the two institutions; and this, indeed, is one secret of the success of the former.

It is a source of continual wonder how it is that, with

so little to attract materially as regards the building, fitting, and accommodation of many Sunday schools, and without powers of compulsion or bribes and rewards, so many scholars present themselves so regularly. The fact that more scholars are found voluntarily assembled in the Sunday schools of the metropolis on the Lord's Day than are gathered into the day schools during the week, with all the powers of compulsory attendance, is the best argument that could be adduced in favour of the Sunday school as a means of teaching and instructing the young. They like the association with those of their own age; they are attracted by the teaching from the good old Book, even when imperfectly conveyed; and there is a wondrous power exercised in the constant sympathy, care, and love of the teachers, even over the hearts and minds of those who are unconscious and unappreciative of them.

The power and advantage of the Sunday school lie mainly in these two forces—the Word of God, and the moral influence of the teacher exerted for the scholars' welfare. The Bible commends itself, even to those whose hearts have not yet been reached by its saving truths; and the love of the teacher is understood, if not rightly appreciated, by all but the most careless and hardened scholars. These are the two factors so potent over scholars who have advanced beyond the age of children, and who are found in such large numbers in some parts of the country, and we believe in increasing numbers in schools generally. This is not the place to discuss how best to retain senior scholars, but it is the place to emphasize the fact that the Sunday school is fitted to instruct those of any age who feel that there is still much to learn of Divine truth; and whenever these two influences are in operation—the intelligent teaching of God's Word, and the sympathetic love and regard of the teacher—these young men and women will be retained, getting blessings for themselves, and becoming a source of gracious influence on the school.

Of course there must be a wise adaptation of means and methods. The sympathetic love and regard of which we have spoken will evince something more than a vague yearning for the salvation of the class: there will be an increasing desire to consult the tastes and wishes of the scholars themselves; and in proportion as such are found in operation will it become evident that there is no institution nor means so well calculated to carry on religious instruction among young men and women, and even among those who have advanced into full manhood and womanhood, as the Sunday school wisely administered.

Again, the Sunday school is its own witness. We are often discouraged that so many young people slip away from the school just at an age when its influence is likely to be most useful; but, on the other hand, what cause there is for encouragement and gratitude that every Sunday so many young men and women, and those also of more mature years, resist the allurements of ease and pleasure and are found in their classes at the Sunday school, where outwardly there may be so little to attract. The Sunday-school system is well adapted to meet the needs of elder scholars: it is the fault of the church, or of the school, or probably of both, when scholars leave before they are out of their teens. If the church encourages, in any way, the idea that the school is only for training the young, or, what is much the same in effect, takes no pains to supply adequate accommodation and provision for those who have passed beyond the age of childhood, the scholars will slip away just at the time when they most need earnest spiritual teaching, and when their presence is not only desirable for their own sakes, but also for the sake of the school.

THE MAIN PRINCIPLE OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL—that of the personal dealing of the teacher with the scholar, as distinct and separate from the treatment of them as a whole—is as applicable and as necessary for those of

maturer as of younger years. There is an individuality of treatment in dealing with a class that there cannot be with a congregation, however well known its members may be to the minister. The teacher knows his scholars by name, and by circumstance; he is acquainted with their surroundings, at home and at business; he knows the kind of moral atmosphere they breathe; he often is, as far as possible, their friend and adviser; and at all events he is able to make his teaching personal and pertinent. He deals not in generalities; his teaching is not over their heads, nor as of a bow drawn at a venture: as a rule his class is composed of one sex, and its members, in sympathy, experience of life's temptations, if not in social position, have much in common; his teaching need not, therefore, consist of vague generalities, but may be personal and direct. Then, besides the session of the school, the teacher will have other opportunities of influencing his class: he is, in a sense, their pastor and their friend, out of school; and by conversation, visitation, correspondence, and in a variety of ways, he may do much to supplement the Sunday teaching. Ministers have lamented, over and over again, that their ministrations are so vague and indefinite: they go on preaching year after year, and perhaps never come into contact with souls they may have influenced; and they long for the direct dealing and for the individual intercourse which a teacher has with his class. This indeed, is one of the great advantages of the Sunday school, and one which it is to be hoped nothing will ever supersede.

Then, on the part of the class, there is a feeling of individual interest and possession, and oftentimes of prestige and pride, which keeps its members together, preserves the discipline and even dignity of the class, and tends to unite the members in associated effort, of a missionary or philanthropic character.

The Sunday school fosters such feelings in a way

nothing else can do. The members of senior classes, of either sex, are often knit together by ties of common interest, friendship, and affection which have not only been of inestimable advantage to the members themselves, but have proved of immense value to the church and community with which they have been connected.

The main idea of the Sunday school—that of gathering scholars in classes round a teacher whose aim, prompted by love for Christ, is to make them acquainted with His saving love, to train them for His service, to develop in them a Christian character—is so unique that nothing can supply its place, and is so grand that, to its more complete realization the Christian church, and all who stand related to the school, may well do all within their power.

BENJAMIN CLARKE.

# THE RELATION OF ADULTS TO THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

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THE relation of Adults to the Sunday school is a subject which deserves the attention of other Christian workers besides those engaged in the schools.

So long as scholars can be retained in the school, the Church has a hold upon them more or less strong; and they themselves are pledged to some attachment to God's people. But the probability is great that their continuance in the school will result or has resulted in actual Church membership, and in personal dedication to the Lord.

It cannot, however, be doubted that the subject is one of especial and peculiar interest and importance to those whose time and labours are devoted to Sunday school work. To them it is a joy to see the fruit and foliage that follow after long and toilsome work in preparation of soil and seed-sowing; to them it is a vast reward to see men and women in school and sanctuary for whom they prayed and thought, and whom they taught years before; and, on the other hand, it is a grief to them to know that many who gave promise of better things in childhood have either wickedly departed from God, or are careless and indifferent about the claims of true religion.

In dealing with the subject of "the Relations of Adults

to the Sunday school" we propose to limit our observations chiefly to those who are to be classified as scholars or counted as subordinate officers.

There are many other adults connected with the schools whose relations to the institution are very close, very interesting, and most important, but they do not demand our attention at present; of such are superintendents, secretaries, librarians, and the noble army of teachers. Their attachment is sure.

In some places, notably in Wales, there is no great difficulty with reference to the retention of elder scholars. There are many schools in England in which there are very vigorous classes of adults. But it is unhappily the sad fortune of an immense number of schools to lose a great proportion of their scholars when they reach their teens. This is to be deplored. It disappoints and discourages teachers. It shows in many instances a bad state of feeling and heart of the young people. It destroys the hope and expectation of the Church. It sends out into the world a large host of partially taught persons who are hard to be dealt with, religiously, in after days; and as conversion to God is more probable and more valuable in the days of youth than later in life, it makes thoughtful Christians mourn over the fact that a great opportunity has been missed, and causes them to fear that on the tumultuous waves of life many will make shipwreck of all that is good.

It may be asked—

#### I. WHAT ARE THE RELATIONS OF ADULT SCHOLARS TO THE SUNDAY SCHOOL WHICH ARE DESIRABLE AND POSSIBLE?

(a.) There is continued relation—continued connection. In many cases through several years of childhood attendance at the school has been one of the joys of life; there have been punctuality, attention, diligence, good conduct,



and the fairest promise of future excellence; when after a time regularity ceased, attachment to the class was weakened, and soon attendance altogether was dropped. Doubtless in myriads of instances kindly feelings towards the teachers and the place survived, and loving memories were cherished, but there was no continued relationship. The result was disastrous to the scholars, and painfully disappointing to the teachers.

Happily the reverse is frequently the case. The school, the teachers, the officers, the companions, the habit of attendance have such a hold of the youth that they resist all temptations to leave. Sometimes the custom has been so long lasting that two or three generations of the family are scholars in the same school.

There is great advantage in such a continued relation of adult scholars in a school; it creates a most healthful public feeling; it secures a strong constituency of elder scholars, who prevent growing lads and girls from supposing that it is childish to go to school; it furnishes a contingent from which to recruit teachers; it trains intelligent Bible-studying members of Christian congregations; it gives a tone to the school; it helps to conserve the results of the toil of previous years; and it gives good cause to hope that the highest and eternal blessing of the scholars will be secured.

(b.) But other adults will become connected with schools which retain their elder scholars.

Some will join who never joined before. From one cause or another they will attend Bible-classes where others of their own age are to be found.

Then young men and women, former scholars in distant schools, who have become residents in the place, will be glad to continue the connection with a Sunday school, and so the adult class will be a refuge and a home to them.

So important is the work among adults in Sunday schools that it should have earnest and direct attention

from pastors, superintendents, and teachers. It demands the best talent and peculiar talent. The wisest, most intelligent, and saintliest of Christ's servants in the Church might feel themselves called to highest honour and most splendid achievements if put to teach and guide our adult scholars. There is no nobler work under the sun than that of purifying and elevating human lives; and there are few finer opportunities of doing this than are possessed by earnest teachers in our adult classes—men and women who have light and life in their own hearts, and who with love, wisdom, and generosity give light and life to the minds and hearts of this interesting and most important class of our Sunday schools. The result of such work will flow longer than oceans, and shine brighter than the stars.

We must not overlook the important fact that of late years a great work has been done in many places by adult classes, especially at Birmingham. These are not all held in Sunday-school buildings. They are worked by various sections of the Church, and have been particularly useful as worked by the Society of Friends. They have won many to Christ. They have encouraged Bible-reading. They have promoted temperance. They have taught thrift. They have become places for the formation of friendships. They have strengthened the Church in its memberships. They have opened new fields for Christian labour. They have proved that tens of thousands of working men and women are well-disposed to the proper observance of Sunday, and of the Christian religion; and that if God's servants are willing to give time and talent to this department of toil, crowds of their neighbours will be responsive to their call of invitation.

All this should encourage us to seek to increase the number of such classes, and to work them very vigorously with devoted piety, and great prudence.

## II. SOME OF THE DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY OF THE RETENTION OF ADULTS IN THE SCHOOL.

(a.) In many Sunday schools there is no direct provision made for the elder scholars or other adults. In all there should be an Adult Class. In schools in which up to now there has not been any, one should be formed at once. The nucleus might be secured by getting a few adults, servants, and other members of congregations in the first instance to join, and then gradually drafting elder scholars from the school into it. This can be done in cases where the formation of large adult classes apart from the school is impossible, and also in some cases in which it is found desirable to have them both in and out of school buildings.

Numbers of big boys and grown girls leave our schools, month after month, simply because they will not remain with younger children. They consider themselves too old, too tall, too near maturity to be ranked, as before, among the scholars. It is most desirable to set this difficulty aside by creating a public opinion in favour of remaining in connection with the school; but this can only be done by making it the fashion to attend adult classes. No doubt it is not the best reason that youths should remain because others attend, but almost any cause that retains them is desirable, for if they stay from the lower motive of companionship or custom, they may secure the highest and best of all blessings. When Orpheus played and charmed the beasts by his music, many beasts went from many motives. They went not because they had refined taste and appreciated music, but for various reasons. The wolf went to look for a lamb; the fox went to observe; the ass went for company; but they all went and they were all charmed. The same thing is true both in congregations and Sunday schools. Many go, not from the highest motives in the first instance,—but it is well they go at all. They come under the influence

of Divine truth, and very many are charmed and eternally saved.

(b.) Perhaps the greatest difficulty in the case arises from the want of suitable teachers.

This difficulty presses even in cities and large schools, how much more, then, in villages and small schools. It is more than one sided. Sometimes elder scholars could be kept if their own teacher could move up in the school with them; but as they outgrow his class they do not choose to go into that of another. Sometimes, however, they chafe under their old teacher, who has not the tact to deal with them as they grow older. They resent the treatment that deals with them as if they were babies. They discover that when they go to draw the water of instruction the well is dry.

Then another side of this difficulty is seen in the fact that too often there is no efficient teacher ready to receive outside adults who wish to join, or elder scholars who need to be retained. And yet there are hundreds and thousands of intelligent, warm-hearted, but unemployed Christians in the Church who would be admirably fitted for this work, if they were called to it, and if they would be properly responsive to the call. It is much to be regretted that there is so great a waste of intellect that lies torpid in the vast multitude of Christian worshippers, when there are so many opportunities for holy toil. On the other hand, how sad it is that the very industry of intellect is so often busily exerted in labours that will be profitless, even by God-fearing persons. The ministers and officers of the Church, both in the Sunday school and beyond, should recognize it as Church duty, definitely, wisely, and as part of Church work, to provide teachers for the adult classes in our schools.

(c.) The jealousy of position must not be permitted to injure the work. Other teachers must be willing to allow favourite scholars to move up; nay, should encourage

them to do so. Other teachers, also, must be willing to welcome an outsider, if need be, when such an one, specially adapted to the work, comes in.

In many of the greater schools the difficulty of obtaining teachers for these classes will be minimized. It is part of the work of an efficient Sunday school to train its own officers; and where adult classes are thoroughly organized as part of the institution, teachers will often be in preparation for them. Such prove to be the best. There is, in South America, a grass which has this peculiarity, that the young plant grows up sheltered in the sheath of the old one. The old blade withers, the new one is ready to take its place. It is always well to have it so with good systems; it is especially well to have it so in our schools.

Probably if the difficulty as to the teacher of adult classes is overcome, the highest mountain has been scaled. The right person will attract, hold, and influence. The value of the result can scarcely be overestimated. Human life will attest it. The majority of those retained in early manhood will be retained for all their earthly pilgrimage, and for citizenship in the true Eternal City. They will feed the lamp of their hope in these classes, and there find it shielded from the fierce blasts of scepticism; from the teachings a holy radiance will be reflected over the whole road of their life's journey; and when they pass on from their sunset on earth to their dawn in eternity, they will have to rejoice greatly that they continued from childhood to age, from cradle to grave, scholars to learn, servants to serve, youths and adults to teach and to be taught.

(*d.*) The tastes of youths are often a difficulty in the way of their retention.

When youths stand on the threshold of manhood, unless they have been converted to God, their future is generally doubtful and uncertain. Temptation will bring music to their ears; the foe within will rebel against purity; the foes outside will beset their paths daily;

there is no hope that any of them will escape Satanic attack. For, alas! it matters not how many are the numbers of our youths emerging into manhood and mature life, there are hosts enough of the Evil One to possess them all; the wolf is never troubled by the large number of sheep, and the devil is never troubled by the size of swelling crowds. At Gadara there were two thousand swine, but there was "a devil for every pig, and a pig for every devil;" and the parable of the miracle is justified still, for all around so far has Satan found a devil for every sinner; and, alas! there have been and are millions of millions of human hearts which are homes for devils, hearts that should be temples of the Holy Ghost. It is therefore most desirable that wise and godly teachers should study the temperament and tendencies, and consider the surroundings of every scholar. Their human nature must be recognized: their higher intellectual difficulties, and their lower appetites must be reckoned with. The natural and acquired tastes of youth may be subdued to service, but their tendency is to assume mastership. They are sometimes powerful auxiliaries to the Christian teacher, but very frequently they become the chief difficulty when we try to retain young people in the schools and churches. A great work has been accomplished if we teach our scholars to make their judgment prevail over their will; and if we can train them to permit their better instincts and their conscience to hold the reins and control the tendencies to irregular courses and waywardness of life. Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control, wisdom in the selection of companions and amusements, and the proper regulation of tastes are qualities of immense value to youths; but as they are not universally possessed, we must act accordingly, and as far as possible overcome the difficulty by wise treatment, judicious counsel, and by bringing as many varied influences to bear upon the individual lives of our scholars as we possibly can. If we

succeed it will mean more than the retention of elder scholars in the schools, like ships in port. It will save the good ship "Man" from wreck, and avert that worst of all tragedies, the tragedy of a wasted life.

(e.) The change of residence of scholars is a great difficulty, so far as the retention of many are concerned.

Myriads cease attendance at Sunday schools for no other reason than that they leave the neighbourhood. Uncounted hosts of youths from villages flock to the cities. This is not peculiar to England. It is common at least to the old world. Paris is France. Rome is Italy. London with Manchester, Birmingham, and Liverpool are almost England. The great towns have mighty influence, are powerful magnets; they are dictators to the villages and lesser towns; they are huge reservoirs into which flow the active, the intellectual streams of the nation. It has become the saying that "all our best and pushing young men go to the towns." This is not an unmixed good. It often involves mischief. It does not nearly always result in prosperity. But there is the fact. It cannot be denied. It need not be denounced. The tendency will increase rather than lessen. As surely as a devotee of Mahomet works his way when he can to Mecca, so surely will country lads and lasses go to towns. When they go they must necessarily be lost to their own old schools. But why should they necessarily be lost to schools, to the Church, to Christ? Just at the point of leakage we want care and watchfulness. We need three things in our Sunday-school system; viz.—1. A regular arrangement for the official transfer of all scholars leaving a school because of removal of residence; this could readily be made. The notes of removal should be threefold: (a.) one given to the scholar to present on arrival at a school in the town to which he goes; (b.) one sent by post to the superintendent of some school in such town; (c.) a counterfoil retained in the removal book.

2. We need further a regularly working band of persons, in large towns especially, whose Christian business it should be to look after all transferred scholars; and to seek out others who have come up from other places who were never formally transferred. 3. We need also to cultivate the habit of correspondence between former scholars and their old schools.

It is very probable that if an earnest systematic attempt was made, in the great centres of population, merely to recover old Sunday-school scholars who have lapsed in the first instance simply through removal to new localities, it would prove to be one of the most successful missions of modern times. Then existing adult classes would be strengthened, and their number multiplied.

But what is true respecting villagers going to towns is also true with reference to Englishmen and emigration. Australia, America, India are every year drawing away large contingents from our schools, and emigration, seafaring life, the army, and other causes continually aggravate the difficulty of retaining elder scholars. Still, let us not forget all are not lost. Untabulated numbers join the Churches; the ranks of teachers are strengthened; and often when the casual observer might suppose that only ungodliness prevailed, the Lord can say of the place, as He did of Corinth, "I have much people in this city;" and the reason is, there are so many old scholars there.

### III. THE PECULIAR NECESSITIES OF ADULTS IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

We have already mentioned some of these—a suitable and separate room for class purposes, and a teacher or leader adapted to the particular work: these are absolutely necessary in order to secure the retention of elder scholars and the success of the class.



It is of prime importance to keep the desired end distinctly in view, and never to forget the chief "necessity" of each life. The aim is not to secure mere physical bodily presence in the school. It would be easy to devise means that would succeed in simply filling a building, and yet fail to do Sunday-school or Christian work. The spiritual improvement, the actual conversion of each person, has to be aimed at. Every scholar for Christ and Christ for every scholar is a necessity. Without the life of God in the soul our young people are without all that makes existence desirable. It should therefore be the constant and direct aim of all adult-class teachers to bring their charge to personal faith in the living Lord, and to a personal loving and avowed membership in His Church.

But there are other necessities consequent on this life. The child of God will need care, culture, companionship, spiritual food, mental instruction, and much help for the development of the new and higher life. These will demand from his guides thought, study, ability to teach, friendliness of disposition, practical wisdom, and an earnest spiritual life.

In considering the necessities of elder scholars we must never forget that all their days are not Sundays, nor is every place school or church. They have to live in a work-a-day world a very matter-of-fact life. Often their home surroundings are unfavourable to either mental culture or spiritual life. They sit at hearths where, despite kinship and blood relationships, they are strangers; they have little sympathy and evoke little in the household circle; they need even human friends who will be in true friendship more than their brothers are to them. Cases of this sort are not rare. They should be provided for. The school should be more than a *Sunday* school. It should arrange for week-nights as well as Sundays. It should be a harbour of refuge. It should furnish a safe resort. It should begirt youths around by good

influences. It should comfort them by friends. It should spread pure literature, books and papers, before their eyes; and enlist sweet singers and skilful players to discourse music for the ear and heart. It should, when practicable, have a school or church parlour, pleasant, pretty, attractive, into which the solitary of families, the isolated, the companionless, the two and threes, the lads and girls from distant homes could go and find welcome and safe enjoyment. It would be a good use of space and a profitable expenditure of money in many a town if such a room was attached to God's house or the schools.

Doubtless the highest aim and design of Sunday schools must always be kept distinctly in view, but it must never be forgotten that our elder scholars, and those who soon will be such, are not angels but human beings; that they have the ardour, the enthusiasm, the impulsiveness of youth; that they have often even much that is like superfluous steam to the engine. They crave for action; they desire diversion; they want amusement; not indisposed to be grave at times, at times too they are gay in heart. Are these characteristics to be ignored? are they to be denounced? May they not be met? may they not be utilized? The miller hails with joy the rush and roar of the torrents from the hills—by them he can work his mills. Why should not the Church welcome all the characteristics of almost universal youth? They will help to work a hundred activities. But until utilized, what then? Is the school to cater for the pleasures, recreations, and amusements of its adult scholars? How far may it go? What is its duty? The man who can settle the question of amusements for the Christian Church, wisely, satisfactorily, and sufficiently, will confer one of the greatest blessings on the world, and deserve to have a monument of gold, and a grave when he dies in that old Abbey where for a thousand years a sanctuary of God has stood, and where that king that has not died yet through

all the ages, whose name is Death, has laid low many monarchs and more crownless kings. Still, we must try to do something towards dealing with the difficulty. Certainly we must not leave Satan nor his children to provide the recreations. We must not ignore the craving. If we do, we may live to rue it. Innocent amusements may be provided both in summer and winter. Teachers should give themselves to the duty of retaining their scholars by every proper inducement. The undertaking will develop talent as well as please others. There are intelligent and educated persons, for example, who will never preach sermons, perhaps never teach in Sunday schools, who could explain a picture or deliver a capital lecture; there are numbers of good musicians who would feel that in singing or playing for one night a week for the definite purpose of elevating or gratifying the tastes of their neighbours, or for keeping youths attached to the school and away from bad company, they were doing a good work, who shrink from so-called Church work. Why should not their services be utilized? There are, indeed, many who in various ways would help in this branch of good work, if inventive Christian organizers would only lay down the lines, and give them invitations.

There is little reason to doubt that a large proportion of our elder scholars would never seek their recreation elsewhere if they could stay in the schools on week-nights; and the probability is that others would be attracted to the place if some arrangements were made for their entertainment. They go to theatres, music-halls, public-houses, and other disreputable places often because they know of no better in which they can spend their evenings and "enjoy themselves." Show them better and they will go. Some years ago a ship lay in the London Docks horribly cursed by rats. Their number, their odour, their destructiveness was intolerable. One day a West Indiaman, richly freighted with luscious fruit, came alongside. A strong

rope was thrown from her to the other ship. In the night the mate of the rat-stricken ship awoke the captain. The rope seemed to be alive. To their joy they saw the rats were migrating. They left their old quarters because they scented better. In the morning not a rat was left behind. How it fared with the stranger ship need not be told. But men and youths are like the rats. Bring near to them that which is pleasant, attractive, better, and you will secure them. The rich fruit we can provide will retain our own, and will win outsiders. And all the subsidiary work of this kind will lead to that which is higher. It will teach us, that the religion of our Saviour, that makes us glad at heart and willing to seek the happiness of others, is not a spiritual straight-jacket, but gives all needful freedom of mind, and heart, and life; making the life that now is joyous, and assuring us of that which is to come.

There is a large class of adults, elder scholars, in the great cities whose case deserves further attention. It would be interesting to know the number of youths and maidens who year after year come to towns from village homes, and to the large cities—those immense sponges absorbing the population—from smaller towns. Many of them connect themselves at once with schools and churches; but many of them are lost from the first. This often arises from the fact that when lodgings were sought for them a wrong selection was made. It is surely not utopian to suggest that, in the great centres of commerce at least, it would be an unspeakable blessing if thoroughly good Hostels were opened, in which the sons and daughters of Christian people and elder scholars from our schools could live. These Hostels to be not merely hotels for private enterprise, but conducted for the sake of Christ and His Church on religious common-sense principles. They would be houses of Christian people; places of refuge for un-experienced youth; in them parents could confidently

place their children ; and so far as human precaution could secure safety they would be safe. The various denominations of Christians might do well to consider the feasibility of such a proposal. It would help to meet a necessity. It would help to retain numbers of our youths.

But there are other adults in our schools who have their peculiar necessities. Some are sheltered in the houses of excellent parents ; others who, although scholars, are neither children at home nor youths, but who have reached mature life. It is impossible to treat the subject exhaustively so far as all these are concerned, but it may be said that the officers of every school in which such are found should consider their cases very carefully, and by all proper means seek to promote their good and cultivate their affection for the school. In military affairs directions may be extensively given for warfare and tactics, and then it is said something, perhaps much, "must be left to the natural intelligence of the soldier." Precisely ; and always assuming that the said soldier has "natural intelligence," it is a wise thing to leave "something" to it. So here.

#### IV. THE MODIFICATION OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL SYSTEM TO MEET THE DEMANDS OF ADULT CLASSES.

Notably in many places there needs to be a considerable modification in structural arrangements. Old buildings require to be adapted. Rooms separate from the bulk of the school are absolutely essential. In the erection of new buildings for school purposes architects should receive directions with their first instructions to arrange for ample separate class-teaching in various rooms. No plans should be accepted simply because they are pretty pictures. Close attention should be given to the proposals respecting the rooms for adults, care should be taken as to size, light, ventilation, temperature, modes of ingress and egress,

access to the rooms being, if practicable, both from the main hall of the school and from the outside or passages, so that members can enter or leave without necessarily passing through the general schoolroom. The plan of radiating rooms is an admirable one. By it the advantages just mentioned are secured, with the great additional one that by simply opening a door the members of the class form part of the congregation of the school without moving from their own class-room. Minor details are also important, such as the shape of seats, furnishing of the room with taste, decoration of the walls, and supply of books. In some places it is doubtless impossible to secure all for which we plead; but in many of these it is quite possible to make such modifications of existing arrangements as would result in great improvement. The plea that things have done very well as they are is not decisive. "Acorns were good until bread was made."

There are schools in which it is scarcely practicable to get separate rooms for adult classes. In many such cases it would be well for those classes to be met in other places, or private houses; and in fine weather in the country, in open air, in field or garden, or park, or on the hill-side.

Sometimes considerable modification will need to be made in the Sunday-school system of work if these classes are to succeed. It is desirable that their connection with the school should have recognition in one or more of the public exercises; in the opening or closing devotions, or in both; occasionally in attendance at the address; always at the anniversary: but the rules and requirements applicable to the general school cannot be made to apply all round to adult classes. There must be judicious management. Men and women who are as old as the officers and older than some of the teachers, will not be treated as if they were boys and girls; and grown youths will resent being dealt with as if they were babies. Mischief has not infrequently been done by school officers, other than

adult-class teachers, showing too much of the wand of office; forgetting that the attendance and submission of adults is purely voluntary, and that the old Scotch proverb is very applicable to them: "Friends are like fiddle-strings, they mauna be screwed owre tight."

It may also be needful to modify arrangements as to the appointment or promotion of teachers.

Occasionally, where no adult class has met, and where a person well qualified to teach has been at hand, another who cannot attract or retain elder scholars, but who happens to be the teacher of the senior class, has objected against the formation of an adult class, and against the appointment of a teacher who would come into the school and take scholars older than his. Such an objection should not be tolerated for an hour. The dog should be turned out of the manger who cannot eat the hay himself, yet barks so loudly as to keep away the nobler animal that can. Such an objection declares his unfitness for Sunday-school work. He has not even learned the lessons taught in John the Baptist's school, much less is he fit to teach those of the greater Master. It is a very dreadful responsibility for any man to take, when, because of his idea of his own personal dignity and importance, he prevents a great work of God from being done. He should either yield at once or retire. His place could be filled; but if souls be lost through his obstinacy the loss is irretrievable and eternal. The question should not be left for him to settle. The interests of the school and of souls should not be allowed to suffer. He holds his place as a teacher not for rank, but for service. If he is a hindrance, and will not improve, he should either be urged to cultivate the grace and act of resignation, or be removed.

So far, therefore, as the appointment of teachers to their classes goes by seniority in promotion—a very objectionable plan—it will be needful to modify the arrange-

ment when teachers are required for classes of adults. The work is so important, so exacting, so delicate, that the fittest person available should at almost any cost be detailed to it. Its success or failure depends largely on the personal characteristics and aptitude of the teacher.

Each such teacher should be very loyal to the school, and bend his efforts to make the class groove in as far as possible with the general arrangements of the school. He should be very careful not to form an *imperium in imperio*. He must act as one of a body of officers, not as commanding in chief. He must remember his obligations to the church of which the school is part, and which gives him his standing-place. If the arrangements of the school are modified so as to make his work more easy and successful, he, on the other part, should strive to make his class a source of strength and a model for the whole school.

The system of every school should be as thorough as possible, but it should be elastic. In the government of a family, a clan, a kingdom, or empire, there is always a distinction made between infants, children, and adults. It must be so, too, in Sunday schools. In some instances considerable modification will have to be made in the system of working if adult classes are to succeed; but the cost will not be too great, the effort will not be unblessed if the lambs and sheep of the Good Shepherd's flock can be kept in the fold, and preserved from the exposure and danger of the bleak mountains and sterile wilderness.

CHARLES H. KELLY.



# ON THE CONSTITUTION, ORGANIZATION, AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

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ONE of the most hopeful evidences of the development and extension of the Sunday school is found in the growth of the Sunday-school idea.

The Sunday school is not so much an institution, which has come down to us confined within stereotyped and formal limits, as it is an idea, which has been entertained by Christian men and women from generation to generation, with ever broadening expansion, and with ever widening development.

Such a subject as heads this chapter needs to be treated every few years; for what was written twenty years ago, however ably and fully, would need expanding to adequately express the Sunday-school idea of to-day.

And this it is that constitutes its power, and gives indication of its ever developing influence. There are ministers, and even Sunday-school teachers, who look on the school as a useful institution that has been handed down to us, the product of a less enlightened age than ours, but yet possessing some advantages even for ourselves. These have no true apprehension of the Sunday-school idea.

If we regard any institution as merely meeting the

needs of an earlier generation, unnecessary and out of date in this, though possessing some useful features, for which it may be a little longer tolerated, we are not likely to labour for its adaptation to present needs, nor for its fuller expansion. But, on the contrary, we believe that though the Sunday school was the product of a darker age, when the religious education of the young, outside the family, was really neglected, it is still a necessity in this, when the desirability of training children of all classes in the ways of righteousness is, at least, allowed by the nation, by the church, and by parents.

There is a no less development of the Sunday-school idea than there is an improvement in the religious condition of society; and so it has come to pass that the Sunday school of to-day, instead of being an effete or worn-out institution, that, useful once, needs no longer a continuance, has really a higher mission, and is a more vital force than ever.

The constitution, then, of the Sunday school is a different thing from what it once was, and it is because this is not adequately recognized that the Sunday school has not yet obtained its proper position, nor put forth its full power. If we do not realize the growing powers and capabilities of the child, we are not doing what we may to develop his nature; and thus we not only do him an injustice, but we do not ourselves recognize his capabilities, nor make use of his energies.

Just so has it been with the Sunday school. So long as it has been considered merely as a field for the employment of Christian activities that might do harm if not directed into at least a harmless channel, or a place where the neglected duties of godless parents might be to some extent discharged, it has not been rightly estimated, and, of course, has not been adequately developed.

There are, however, two most hopeful signs in our day concerning the Sunday school: the first is the growing

realization of the idea that the Sunday school is a vital part of church life and work; and the second is the ever widening fostering care which the Sunday school does exert over all who come within its influence.

But the first of these signs now demands attention, and helps us to define more clearly the first division of the subject at the head of this chapter.

### THE CONSTITUTION OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

In the animal world it is, alas! true that creatures whose constitutions are well known are not always properly treated; but it is very certain that no animal can have justice done to it whose nature is misunderstood. And with the Sunday school, though it is not from ignorance of its constitution that all the want of recognition and realization of its importance arises, it is evident that unless its nature be recognized it is not likely to find scope for its fullest expansion.

The Sunday school, then, is a vital part of the Church; or, as some prefer to designate it, it is the Church in its ministry to the young. Negatively, it is *not* an institution separate from the Church, though officered and carried on by members of the Church; it is *not* a home-missionary operation, which may or may not exist, as there may be a desire, or otherwise, to engage in such a service. The Sunday school is the Church in her relation to the young, as much as the services of the sanctuary or the week-evening services are the Church in its ministries to adults. It has not always been so deemed; it is not now always so administered: but these conditions no more invalidate the true constitution of the Sunday school, than the fact that many men lead active lives and do useful work in open violation of the constitution of their physical nature.

The formation of the Sunday school may be an initial act, or an after-effort of the Church. Sometimes, in villages

and country districts, the formation of the Sunday school has been the nucleus from which a church has afterwards arisen. In the outlying regions of America, particularly in the far west, there are to-day thousands of churches which have grown from the seed planted in the Sunday school. But, generally, the church is first formed, and then the school. The church should first determine that a school must be formed, and then should select one of her members, who is deemed most suited, as superintendent. The pastor should be recognized, as a matter of course, president. He need not be elected ; he is, by virtue of his office, head, at least, of all the spiritual institutions of the church.

A great deal, indeed, most of the real management of the school, will be delegated to the superintendent ; but the latter will feel that his power is a delegated one. It is as much the duty of the pastor to look after the young, as the adults ; indeed, if it were a matter of opposing claims that could be met in no other way, it would be his first duty to provide for the young. If it were not possible to obtain the services of a most suitable superintendent, it would be the pastor's *first* duty to provide for the instruction of the young.

Suppose a case—and it is well within the bounds of possibility : suppose that a pastor called to the pastorate of a small church should be unable to lay his hands on any man or woman whom he might deem suited for the office of superintendent, what should he do ? Go on with his ministry to the adults, and leave the children uncared for ? Clearly not. He should either form a school and train some of his adult hearers as teachers, leaving the others to come and receive what instruction they might be able ; or he should so conduct the services in the sanctuary as that, at least, the morning of the Sabbath should be given up to the young, though not, of course, to the exclusion of his grown-up people. The reasonableness of

this is apparent. The young are in the most impressionable and most hopeful period of their lives ; they are most easily led for good or for evil ; and, therefore, to neglect them is to leave them to influences which are sure to corrupt and destroy.

Adult church members who grudge the children their portion in the quarterly sermon to them, or who resent the five or ten minutes devoted to them in the morning service, do not realize that the pastor's duty is to the young ; nor do they fully realize how much they owe to the Sunday school, which, by its special care of the young, releases the pastor so much for ministrations to his adult flock.

It will be well that the deacons, elders, or church officers, by whatever name called, should be not only officially but vitally interested in the Sunday school. The interference, or even presence of such officers is sometimes resented ; but this is only in a vicious condition of things, where the school has become almost a separate institution from the church, self-contained, independent, foolishly allowed to become so by indifference and want of interest on the part of the church, until it has got to feel that as it has derived little from the church, it is not disposed to admit authority and control.

The presence of these officers, and, of course, the pastor, should be welcomed at all meetings of teachers, or the more public meetings of the school ; though, unless they are themselves teachers, they will not, perhaps, often avail themselves of the opportunity—at least, at the Teachers' meetings.

The happiest conditions are found when, as it often happens, the pastor is in active sympathy and co-operation the head of the school, and when the church officers are themselves teachers or school officers.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL ORGANIZATION.

If a Sunday school be rightly constituted its organization is a simple one. This does not imply that organization is of little moment, or that it is of necessity an easy matter. Let the one leading, constitutional idea of a Sunday school be that it is a vital part of the church, and it will be embodied in every step of its organization. If the superintendent holds his power from the church, he will feel that he is responsible to it for the conduct and management of the school. When appointed by the teachers, he should have his appointment confirmed by the church. He may report to the church his appointment of teachers; or he may bring before her the selection he has made with a view of their being formally set apart to their office by the church. The former plan will generally be found the more practicable and desirable; but in any case it will be well for the church to have an opportunity of recognizing those who have been called to undertake the instruction of her young, and to commend them by some simple service in prayer to the Holy Spirit, without whose grace and enlightenment they can but labour in vain. Such a recognition of the teacher's work and office by the church cannot but add to the sense of the importance of the position on the teacher's part, whilst it assures him of the church's interest and support.

Even in cases where the superintendent is selected and appointed by the church, the appointment is often confirmed by the teachers who act under him. And as many of the teachers are usually members of the church, they have an opportunity before the appointment of considering his fitness for the post. In most cases, however, the superintendent is elected by the teachers, usually with the advice or concurrence of the pastor; and in such cases, the appointment being from year to year, the teachers

have it in their power to indicate their approval, or otherwise, of the superintendent. He, then, is not only the officer of the church, but he is also the officer of the school, whom they have elected; and by their co-operation alone can he hope to direct the school successfully. They are bound, therefore, by every consideration, to uphold his authority, carry out his directions, and do all in their power to promote the efficiency and the welfare of the school.

Thus solemnly recognized, the teacher should feel that it is no light duty he has taken upon himself, no mere impulse to be doing something that he has yielded to. He should see in the scholars entrusted to him no mere gathering of children, whose attendance is quite as voluntary as his own; but he should realize that he is an ambassador for Christ, a servant of the church, an under-shepherd to these lambs, bound to them by the tenderest bands, and related to the school by the most solemn responsibilities.

His services are unpaid, and his attendance is voluntary; but so far from the freedom of his service being any plea for laxity of duty or irregularity of attendance, on a rightly constituted mind it will have the very opposite effect.

His obligations are purely moral, and cannot be enforced by any legal considerations; therefore are they to be the more conscientiously discharged.

He has entered into no legal contract by becoming a teacher, and no consequences materially detrimental can follow any neglect of duty; but he has none the less entered into very serious engagements, and has taken upon himself very solemn obligations. To the church he has become responsible for the care of the young committed to him. They are the children of the church, for whom she is responsible; they are the lambs of the flock, over whom the pastor has been set; and in committing

them to the teacher's care they do not get rid of their responsibility; they do but take the teacher into a co-partnery of concern and privilege. The teacher owes it, then, to the church and to the pastor that he prove faithful to his charge.

With the school he has entered into serious engagements, and to the superintendent he is under solemn obligations. The superintendent has appointed him to the class, and he has the power of removing him; but short of that he has very little direct control other than a moral one. He cannot enforce punctual and regular attendance; he cannot insure that the teacher's lesson be well prepared; he cannot be satisfied that the teacher is qualifying himself, by the right use of his leisure and by the wise employment of means within his reach, for the efficient discharge of his duties. He cannot even enforce obedience to the recognized rules of the school, for unless rules are made and passed by the approval of the teachers they will be as a dead letter.

Nevertheless, or may it not be said *because* of all this, it is the duty of the teacher to yield loyal and hearty obedience to the superintendent's rule.

Most schools have a code of rules, written or unwritten, which are seldom irksome or unreasonable. If, however, any of them seem so or become impracticable, the remedy is at hand: the teachers have it in their power to propose amendments or alterations, for they cannot complain of want of freedom of action.

Then, too, the teachers stand in a moral relationship to their scholars. There is a moral contract, which is none the less binding because one of the parties thereto may not fully realize his sense of duty: the scholar undertakes by his attendance to behave properly, reverently, and to submit to all the school regulations; the teacher undertakes to be regular in attendance, prepared with his lesson, and willing to do all he can to train his scholars in religious



knowledge; he also undertakes to do his utmost to conduct his class so that habits of orderly and reverent attention, of self-denial and kindness, of interest in others, of respect for the Sabbath, of filial obedience, and other virtues may be engendered. It need hardly be stated that for all these he must set an example in his own conduct.

It must, alas! be confessed that organization is one of the weak points of Sunday-school management. It is one that has received less attention than most others. The superintendent, often a man of admirable qualities in one or more directions, is sometimes wholly wanting in this. He has, say, little or no acquaintance with day-school methods, and, even if he have, he may not possess the necessary qualities for commanding order and discipline.

This is not the place to contrast or compare the day school with the Sunday school; but it may be frankly conceded that it is not desirable to have so rigid a rule and so mechanical a *régime* as obtains in the day school. Still, whilst pleading for a more social relationship between the teachers and their scholars, and whilst desiring for the teachers greater freedom of action and individuality of method, there must be a respect for order, an obedience to authority, and a compliance with the regulations of the school. These last, as they apply to the whole school, should be promptly enforced by all the teachers; for the discipline of each class the individual teacher is primarily responsible.

One of the most difficult duties of the superintendent is the arrangement of classes. First, as regards teachers: He takes office, say, in a school fairly well supplied with teachers as to numbers, but, whatever their capacity, he has to make the best of them. He is called on to use the material to hand and to continue its use as he finds it. If he be a man of tact and judgment he may soon be

convinced that the school would be better organized if there were a rearrangement of the classes, if there were a pretty general shuffling of the cards. To a large extent square pegs may be in round holes; but he is not able to make any sweeping alterations. The school has grown up like a house that has been added to piecemeal; a floor raised here, a room thrown out there, a tenement reared at the back.

A vacancy occurs in a class, say a large class of small boys, who have been well kept in order by the retiring teacher. The only one obtainable to supply his place has little or no experience in teaching, and none at all of small boys, and has as much sympathy with them. The superintendent would like to break up the class and divide it, but the boys plead to be kept together; he would like to make two or three changes in other classes, so as to get the best teacher for this one, but the teachers urge attachment to their scholars; and so the superintendent makes, against his judgment, an unwise appointment to the vacant class.

The superintendent rests under a disability unknown to the day-school head-master, who can rearrange his classes and place his teachers as may seem most desirable.

Then as to the placing of the scholars when new ones present themselves; the superintendent may ascertain from them the standard in which they are if they attend elementary day schools, or something of their educational proficiency if they are otherwise circumstanced; and he may be able to classify them with scholars of somewhat similar attainments. But the educational test is not always a reliable one. The backward big boy or girl must not be classed with those of equal attainment, or they will be discouraged and offended by being put into a class with those much junior to themselves.

But not only on entering will difficulties arise as to scholars. From time to time a wise superintendent with

his eyes open will observe that certain teachers have no hold on some of their scholars. The scholars themselves, if appealed to, would desire to remain where they are; the lax discipline of the class suits them, and if they are not learning much, they have some regard for their teacher, who is mild and pleasant. Then close companions and bosom friends, who seem to come to school for any other object than the right one, need sometimes to be separated, and others, who have survived their schoolfellows of their own age and standing, require to be moved into other classes.

There is the danger, of course, of disturbing desirable relationships existing between teachers and scholars, which no wise superintendent will wish to interfere with. And, generally, it will be well to take the teacher into confidence and consult him as to the removal of any scholars; but from the fear of doing harm, or, perhaps, oftener still from a dislike to make any change, and for a desire to keep things pleasant, it is certain that the organization of many Sunday schools is sadly at fault.

Too often must it be confessed that organization is not the superintendent's strong point, and the school suffers in consequence. The remedy in such cases is not to get rid of the superintendent until less drastic measures have been tried; but for the teachers either privately or at the Teachers' Meeting to talk over the organization of the school. As a rule the condition of the school is not discussed; each teacher considers his class as his own freehold, and unless the disorder or want of discipline be so glaring as to interfere greatly with personal comfort, there is but little disposition to try and effect any reformation.

From a long experience of Teachers' Meetings and also of united assemblies for conference or discussion, we feel that the office and duties of the superintendent have been too much neglected. The duties and shortcomings of

teachers are often presented, and pastor and church officers are by no means neglected; but superintendents have been too generally ignored. And this is the more remarkable, seeing how much depends on this officer; how large is his authority; how wide his control; how greatly the success or otherwise of the school depends upon him. Standing as he does in a dual relationship to the Church and to the teachers, it is above all things important that right estimates be formed of his office and functions. These may be best considered in the chapter that relates to the Mutual Services of School Officers, and Teachers, and Scholars.

#### THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CHURCH (OR CONGREGATIONAL) AND MISSION SCHOOLS.

In theory they are the same; in all essential points of arrangement they are identical. The main difference is in the class of scholars who attend. Usually it will be found that the church school is the more highly favoured in every way; in school and class-room accommodation, in school material, in supply of teachers, in income. It usually has been longer established than the mission school, and has become one of the recognized institutions of the church; its scholars, or some of them, are drawn from the families of the congregation; their parents are either connected with the school by office, or are else naturally interested in it. Its welfare and condition are often brought under notice of the church by the pastor, and of the members by the scholars themselves. Any want is, therefore, likely to be made known and supplied; any appeal for extension or for more appliances, any suggestion for treats or entertainments, any plea for fresh agencies likely to improve the school, and needing increased expenses for adoption, falls on sympathetic ears, and is readily listened to. Every scholar from the homes

of church members becomes, at times, a champion of, a pleader for, a living testimony to the value of the Sunday school.

But with the mission school it is different. We are speaking now, of course, of churches which have mission stations with schools attached. To begin with, they are often situated far away from the neighbourhood of the church, and distant from the homes of its members. This prevents some from becoming teachers who otherwise might, and it also prevents the frequent visits of friends whose interest and help it would be very desirable to secure. It is as true in this relationship as in others—"out of sight, out of mind."

The mission school not able to secure sufficient teachers from the parent church has to get them from any source open to it; and hence it often happens that the staff is largely made up of those who are not members, who have no particular interest in the church, and who are unable, therefore, to enlist the sympathies of their more immediate friends. Many of the best workers of mission schools are drawn from the neighbourhood of the mission; sometimes they are among its converts, and have risen from the ranks of the school; but in all these cases they are usually able to render but little pecuniary assistance, and often they are so occupied in daily toil as not to be able to give much time to the mission during the week. Nevertheless, it will sometimes be found that from these who have so little leisure are drawn the best workers which the mission has.

Where the parent church takes a pride in her mission station, bears it continually on her heart, and responds freely to her demands, it will be found that the connection between the church and the mission is a doubly blessed one. The best of the workers of the church are often found in the ranks of the mission school; the needs of the school and of the neighbourhood are continually remembered,

and the school never appeals in vain for help. There are some churches whose mission schools have been their joy and pride. There has never been a lack of teachers, or material, and the churches have ever been ready to meet all their needs. The pastors have had a deep and living sympathy with the missions; and the connection between the parent churches and their offspring has proved a source of joy and blessing to both.

The reason of this is not far to seek, and arises from the nature of the work itself.

The church school—by this is meant the school more immediately connected with the church and ministering in the main to the children of her congregation—demands fewer agencies than the mission school. Besides the class teaching on Sunday, the occasional visitation of scholars, the Band of Hope, the Missionary Association, there is not much in the way of organization necessary for the church school. Not that the importance of these should be disparaged, and still less that the preparation of the lessons should be considered a thing of little moment and demanding but little time and thought. Still, after all the necessities of the church school make much less demand on the time and attention of the teachers during the week than those of the mission school. The scholars of the latter, drawn from a lower stratum of society, demand greater help and encouragement. The conditions of their home life are so much against them; the circumstances of their whole surroundings call for so much more sympathy and help. Nursed in poverty, brought up in all the sordidness of straitened homes, too often without any Christian training, robbed at an early age of their boyhood and girlhood, and compelled by the indigence and exigencies of the family to become bread winners as soon as they can pass their standard, these scholars need far more than the Sunday teaching at the hands of their teachers. Penny Banks and Sick Societies to encourage

thrift; literature for their leisure hours; Bands of Hope to promote temperance, and by this and other ways to provide pleasant and useful evenings, thus giving them a taste for innocent entertainment, and keeping them from that which is demoralising; Christian Bands to foster the religious life; Flower Shows and Industrial Exhibitions to afford employment for, and add interest to their home life,—all these and other agencies make demands on the officers and teachers which will tax all their time and develop all their energies. But in proportion as these demands are responded to will the interest and sympathies of the workers be evoked.

Then the temporal needs of the scholars will demand attention: absence from school from want of clothing, sometimes from want of food, weakness and illness from the same cause, will include other duties on the teacher's part than the preparation and the giving of the Sunday lesson. The pastoral side of the teacher's work will need to be developed, and this will involve a visitation of the homes of the scholars. These will reveal conditions of things which will appeal to the tenderest and deepest sympathies of the teacher's heart, and lead to a desire to do something to ameliorate the sad condition of the lives of the scholars and their parents. Here will come in other ministrations than those of teaching, and there will be need of material help, which the teacher, as a rule, will be unable, unaided, to supply. The assistance of personal friends, and above all, of the church, will be sought, so that the more pressing wants may be relieved.

This ministry will strengthen the band, uniting teachers and scholars, and will enlist the sympathy and gratitude of the parents on behalf of the teachers.

By-and-by there will grow up such an interest in the families thus visited and relieved, that a desire to do more for the adult members will be cultivated, and efforts on their behalf, for their religious and material improvement, will

be set on foot; until from the Sunday school will arise a network of beneficent agencies which shall embrace all the interests of both scholars and parents, religious, domestic, and social.

All that affects the scholars through the week, their home life and influences, their daily employment, their reading and amusements, comes within the purview of the Sunday school; and the fact that teachers are beginning to realize that all that affects their scholars comes within the range of their sympathetic interest, proves on how broad and wide a basis the Sunday school rests, and how readily it adapts itself, and how easily it may be developed so as to include all the demands which each succeeding age may make upon it.

BENJAMIN CLARKE.



## ON THE MUTUAL DUTIES OF SCHOOL OFFICERS, TEACHERS, AND SCHOLARS.

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THE smooth and successful working of every institution depends on the right discharge of the relative duties assigned to those who are called upon to develop it. And more especially does this hold true where the duties are self-imposed and voluntarily performed.

It certainly has militated against the success of the Sunday school that its officers and teachers have not always recognized this: too many have taken up their duties without realizing their responsibilities, and have laid them down when they have been found to involve difficulty or inconvenience. It is a sad confession to make, but it is nevertheless true, that many have made the voluntary nature of Sunday school duties a reason why they should be discharged perfunctorily, or left undischarged when convenience or disinclination dictated.

It need not be urged that such an estimate is dishonouring to the work itself and to those who form it: and until those who engage in Sunday-school teaching are inspired with a right estimate of its importance, it is to be feared that it will be too often lightly undertaken. The clear understanding of the constitution of the Sunday school, which has been considered, will do much to put it on a

proper basis. When the school is deemed a part of the work of the church; when the church realizes its relation to it and is jealous of its welfare and management, the duties of those who are called to labour in it will be deemed more responsible and important, and will not be so carelessly performed.

But those who are most interested in the school need not wait until this time arrives: they need not make the failure of the church to regard the school in its right light a reason or pretext why they should not do their utmost; rather may it be that a faithful performance of duty will hasten on the time when the school and church shall stand to one another in their proper relationship. And the fact that the work of the school is honorary and voluntary should be a reason why it should command the most devoted energies and the most loyal service of all who take part in it.

As has been intimated, teaching has been too often taken up from inferior or inadequate motives. Some have found their way into the school merely to oblige a friend who was hard pressed for help, and have continued it from the same feeling; others, because their friends were in the school, and they had no other way, that offered greater attractions, of spending the hours of the Sabbath; others, because their minister told them they ought to be rendering some personal service to Christ, and they felt so too: duty drove them to the school and kept them there, but they expected to find no joy in the work, and, so far, they have not been disappointed: the scholars have not drawn out their affection for them, and habitual attendance has not made teaching easy or pleasant. But they were at the post of duty, and that satisfied conscience; and if weariness of the work, want of interest in it, or unusual discouragement and difficulty met them, it was part of the cross to be taken up; and crosses were never easy to bear.

Now, all these workers had some right feeling which led

them to the school, but they were not impelled by an all-animating spirit of devotion to the work, without which the highest joy in it and the greatest blessing from it are impossible. We must feel that it is Christ's work, that the souls of the scholars are His, that He calls us to be the instruments in His hands of their salvation, and that the Sunday school presents the easiest, the readiest, and the fittest sphere where this saving work can be undertaken.

On the human side the call may not be impressive or important: there may be no authoritative voice of pastor or church heard; there may be only, as it were, a casual invitation of a friend, the appeal of the superintendent, as a last resort, for help, the wish to oblige some one whose class would be for a time vacant; but, when once in the school, and its aim and purpose come to be realized, it will be thankfully acknowledged that behind the human cause, however slight, that led to the school, there has been the Divine voice calling to this service for Him.

The consecration of ourselves to this work will lead us to see that it has relationships to others as well as to Christ. It is His service on which we enter, but there are other workers, and all form part of the same whole. We need Divine direction, not only for our own guidance and enlightenment, but also to enable us to perform our duties in relation to others.

The school is not a place where every servant of Christ may enter and serve Him according to his own inclination, irrespective of others. Teachers sometimes act as if this were the case, and, hence, difficulties arise. Sometimes teachers look upon their classes almost as if they were their fee-simple. Have they not been assigned to them? Have they not been told they are responsible for them? Have they not been urged to adopt as their motto, "My class for Jesus"?

It is well that this sense of personal responsibility and

of individual interest should be encouraged ; it is well that the teacher's main anxieties and efforts should be spent on his own class : but he has other duties to discharge ; he is not to be isolated from the rest of the school. Together with devotion to his class there must be loyalty to the school. The class is his in the sense that he is primarily responsible for its conduct and management ; the class is not his in the sense that he can conduct it as he likes, without reference to others. Hereafter the management of senior classes will be specially referred to ; but, speaking of classes assembled in the schoolroom, it will be evident that they must be carried on according to the general arrangements of the school.

A teacher, when appointed to a class or when joining a school with the desire of being so appointed, should feel that he has connected himself with an association of men and women who have united for certain well-defined ends, and who have decided on certain lines of conduct in their individual and collective capacity. Individually, each teacher is concerned for his class ; collectively, all are anxious for the well-being of the school. A teacher's *first* care will be to conform to the general rules of the school, which he will seek to carry out faithfully and loyally. He will see that this is not only essential to the well-being of the school, but also to the successful conduct of his own class. He cannot expect obedience and respect from his scholars if he be wanting in these to the school ; he cannot hope to exercise authority or to impress his wishes on the scholars if he be regardless of the wishes of his colleagues, expressed by rules or, at all events, by regulation and by custom. Before, therefore, he becomes personally interested in his scholars, he will feel that his first duty is towards the school of which he has become part. At the outset the latter may be easily discharged by the observance of the customs of the school, by regular and punctual attendance, by conforming to the wishes of his officers ;

but behind this there will be a spirit of loyalty which will find, in time, many ways of expressing itself.

It must be fully understood by all who take part in Sunday-school work, that they are not only responsible for their particular class or office, but that they sustain a relationship to the school: in other words, that their duties are not only *individual*, but *mutual*.

In the light of this general relationship to the school, let us inquire what are the duties of those who are engaged in it.

#### THE SUPERINTENDENT.

It has been said that "the Superintendent is the school;" a statement that does not, of course, mean that he alone is necessary, but that so important and so influential is the post, that the Superintendent can make the school almost what he likes. But, even in this limited sense, the statement must be received with some qualification, for, without detracting one whit from the importance of the position, it must be evident, from the mere title of this paper, which treats of *mutual* duties, that the Superintendent largely depends on his fellow-workers for aid and co-operation. Nevertheless, the office of Superintendent is so responsible and so powerful for good or evil, that it may be said that the school is what he makes it.

Let us, then, inquire what are the QUALITIES and the DUTIES which should pertain to the office.

QUALITIES.—Of course, in all that is here written, personal holiness and consecration are implied. It is an axiom in any work for God that the first essential is that the worker be a reconciled son and servant, and that love to God be the impulse prompting him to service. In a manual which is meant to be practical, and which, therefore, should be terse and pointed, much must be taken for granted. The work is intended for those who

are already engaged in the Sunday school, or who intend to be, and assumes, therefore, that the essential conditions of service are understood, and that those who enter upon it are conscious that they can do nothing in their own strength. Our sufficiency is of Christ; this must lie at the root of anything we attempt for Him; and when in these chapters duties are indicated and methods enforced, it is understood that all our work must be "begun, continued, and ended in" Him, and that His all-animating Spirit must not only have called us to this service, but must sustain us and quicken us therein.

But while this has been taken for granted, it may be well to remind ourselves of the Almighty Power which is pledged for our help, and on which we cannot too strongly rely, as we consider what are the duties pertaining to the various positions in the Sunday school. Without such a sense of reliance on God's Spirit, one might well hesitate to enter upon a work that demands so much, or might sink in despair, as its importance and responsibilities became realized.

Especially is this true as one contemplates the QUALITIES which should characterize the Superintendent.

I. *He should love the young*: if he be a father his parental instincts should enlarge his heart towards children generally. But it does not follow that a father will feel a natural interest in other people's children; we know it is sometimes the reverse: nor is it absolutely essential that the Superintendent should himself be a father. There are instances of successful Superintendents, who have no children of their own. But, whether a parent or not, the Superintendent must be a child-loving man. He must love them *for Christ's sake*, who died for them, and who has left such express directions that His lambs should be cared for: and he must love them for their own sakes; as seeing in them that which is worth living for, and, if necessary, dying for. Like Michael Angelo, who

saw the angel in the stone, he must see the angel in the child. When the sculptor saw that, he worked as one under a spell: when the Superintendent realizes what the child may be, what he was destined by God to be, what he may be permitted by God to help him to be, his work becomes divine. Such a conception fires his soul, takes possession of him. No wonder that he becomes *enthusiastic*. Enthusiasm makes him bold in project, carries him through difficulties, enables him to bear disappointment; and it also communicates itself to others—teachers and scholars.

Then this love for the young begets *sympathy*; and sympathy is the passport into the child-kingdom. To be admitted *there* is to obtain a key to the heart of children, which makes it easy to establish near and close relationships. Children, like dogs, have an instinct which draws them towards those who love them.

This love for children, more than aught else, keeps a man *fresh and young*; not, of course, in the silly fashion of aping juvenility in manner or dress, but in preserving very vividly a recollection of his own boyhood, in guiding him instinctively as to what is likely to be acceptable to the young, and in giving him the power of putting himself in the place of the scholars.

It also helps to make him *bright and cheerful*, two essential qualities for all who are called on to take charge, in any way, of young people. It is confessed that a doleful Christian is an anomaly, that for one whose heart is filled with the love of God to be habitually dull is a contradiction; but how much more so when he has to commend religion to the young, and lead them to believe that "wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness."

II. *A Superintendent, then, above all others, must be a man of sanguine temperament and of bright and cheerful manner.* His presence should bring sunshine; his smile should make hearts glad. It need hardly be urged that this is quite distinct from levity or want of dignity, and

that it is quite compatible with firmness and discipline. A man of such a disposition will not only diffuse brightness, but he will be open to any genial influences that surround him; and nothing so cheers one as close contact with the young. The law of nature holds true everywhere: as a man sows, so will he reap; love begets love, and is itself increased; gladness sown in smiles will result in a harvest of joy, and no soil is so fruitful as the hearts of the young. A bright, hopeful disposition finds its most congenial atmosphere in intercourse with children. As Wordsworth says—

“A child, more than all earthly gifts to man,  
Brings hope with it, and forward looking thoughts.”

Childhood is naturally hopeful, and to gain ascendancy and influence over it, one must be in sympathy with it; and to be in sympathy with it, one must be hopeful.

Such qualities as have been indicated help a Superintendent to understand childhood, boyhood, and girlhood; and without an acquaintance with them it is hopeless to expect to govern them. These qualities do not necessarily furnish the required knowledge, but they predispose a man to acquire it, and by making the work pleasant, they make it easy. It is essential, then, that a Superintendent should *understand his scholars*; and this he cannot do without recognizing its necessity and making some effort to acquire knowledge so important. It will not do for him to say, “Of course, I have been a boy myself, and I know, therefore, what boys are.” Boys are not all made alike; children are not cast in one mould, nor supplied as per sample: their ways are manifold; their dispositions various; their tastes multi-form. A Superintendent must study the material he has to direct, not individually, in every scholar, but generally, the broad characteristics of boys and of girls at various ages; and when occasion requires, as in dealing with



troublesome or refractory ones, he should seek to understand their natures and dispositions.

III. Another essential quality is *firmness*: the Superintendent is a *ruler*; he is invested with *authority*; his word is *law*, which both teachers and scholars should implicitly obey. The former may try and uphold the authority of a superintendent wanting in firmness, but it is a difficult duty for them; still more so is it to get the scholars to respect his authority. Firmness conduces to order and discipline; and is necessary in the Sunday school as in the day school. Firmness manifests itself in exacting perfect obedience, and being satisfied with nothing less; it is compatible with gentleness and quietness of manner; and, of course, with amiability. It is not necessary to lose one's temper, to raise one's voice to an undue pitch, to make signals for silence in a violent manner: "in quietness and confidence" may be strength. Something more, however, is needed to temper firmness, and that is *wisdom and discretion*, or, in a word, *tact*. Without this, firmness may degenerate into obstinacy or tyranny. Wisdom and discretion are supplied by study and experience; tact suggests how to apply them. Tact implies fertility of resource, quickness of apprehension, ready insight into character, and decision of conduct. Tact is as necessary in dealing with teachers, and oftentimes with parents, as with scholars. A tyrannical monarch or a self-willed autocrat may rule without tact; but not so a Superintendent, whose teachers render their services voluntarily, and whose scholars' attendance is not compulsorily enforced. In a word, tact supplies that *executive ability* without which there can be no wise government.

IV. But, besides being a *ruler*, the Superintendent is a *teacher*; and for this other qualities are required. First of all, he should be a *student*, and, most of all, a *Bible student*. The Sunday school is a place for Bible study,

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and it is required of one who is at the head that he should be an earnest and diligent seeker after Divine truth. This is necessary for *his own spiritual growth*, as well as to enable him to be the *teacher of others*. He is the leader of the teachers as well as of the scholars; and it is required of a leader that he lead. Those over whom he is set are continually growing; growing mentally, as well as physically, growing in opportunities for good or evil, growing in responsibilities; they should also be growing in all that pertains to a well-developed character. The Superintendent must not be stationary; for his own comfort and joy in the work he must ever be learning more and more of that truth for the study of which the school has been formed and he has been placed over it. In proportion as he reverently studies God's Word will its importance and value be revealed to him; he will feel more deeply how well-adapted is the Sunday school to make it known, and how responsible is the post to which he has been called. In the pages of God's Word he will find light to guide him, comfort to cheer him, wisdom to direct him, and grace to help him to discharge the important and difficult duties which he has undertaken. Feeding on "the sincere milk of the word," he will *grow* thereby.

Then, as the necessities of his own soul are met by diligent study, he will feel that the souls of others need to grow too, and that, as he is their leader, he must help to lead them in the way of truth. In proportion as he gives out to others will he feel that his own soul and mind must be continually replenished. He will thus become the centre of life to the school, and teachers and scholars brought into contact with one whose knowledge of Divine truth is ever widening, will come to feel how much there is to learn from God's Word. He will be "like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old" (Matt. xiii. 52).

Feeling his duty as a leader, the Superintendent will be anxious to acquaint himself with any new methods of work that present themselves; he will study the writings of those who make Sunday school topics the subject of their works; he will avail himself of all help within his reach to inform his mind and to perfect his arrangements.

His mind will be ever open to receive information or suggestions; he will be apt to learn and ready in applying for the benefit of the school that which he does learn. This readiness to acquire, will make him fertile in resource and wise in adaptation. In a word, he will form a very high standard of what the school deserves and what his post demands; and he will be ever striving to realize his ideal.

Having enumerated some of the *qualities* which a Superintendent should possess, let us now consider the *DUTIES* he should discharge.

As his connection with the church has been pointed out, he will ever remember his duty towards it. He will feel that he stands to the school as an under-shepherd, who has to supply the place of the pastor or shepherd, in nourishing and training up the young for Christ and for His church. He will desire, therefore, that the scholars should pass from the school into the church, and to this end he will not only himself labour and pray, but he will constantly, before the teachers and, occasionally, to the scholars, keep this end in view. Circumstances may, perhaps, now and then warrant another arrangement, but as a rule the Superintendent should be a member of the church with which the school is connected. It is desirable that he should be a deacon, or elder of the church, so that the pastor and officers may be kept fully informed of the progress of the school. At all events, the Superintendent should be thoroughly loyal to the church, and should be able, when occasion requires, conscientiously to enforce the particular doctrines held by the church he

represents. There is little danger to be apprehended from making the schools arenas of sectarian teaching; there is some fear lest scholars—and this applies more particularly to the elder ones—should grow up without understanding what are the distinctive religious views entertained by their minister and parents, and why they hold those views.

The Superintendent who is thus called to do the work of the church in the school will have a right to look to the church for the best teachers it can supply. On him will rest the responsibility of accepting or not accepting the services of any who offer themselves as teachers. Unfortunately, the area of selection is generally so limited that he is glad to avail himself of all those who desire to become teachers. Too often he has considerable difficulty in obtaining as many as he requires; and he has to look about and invite persons to become teachers. Where there are many to select from he will choose those whom he may deem the best fitted; but more often he will have to be content with being satisfied that those willing to become teachers are disciples of Christ, and impelled to the work by a desire to serve Him. He will have to take on trust their intellectual or educational fitness, although he will not be indifferent to it, nor content that no effort should be made to increase it.

The Superintendent will assign teachers to the classes for which he supposes them most fitted; he will be guided by their ability, rather than by their social position; he may, however, consult their preferences or take into account their former experience, if any. If the new teachers are unknown to the Superintendent, he will be glad to meet their views, if there be a choice of classes. When appointed, the Superintendent will specially observe for the first few Sundays how the new teachers seem to get on with their classes; he will note whether the order in the class be good and the attention sustained, or whether

the discipline be lax; he will observe whether the lesson be finished before the session closes, and whether that last resort of an incompetent teacher, the story-book, be introduced. He will not fail kindly to point out, in private, what he may consider defects, offering, at the same time, suggestions for their remedy; and he will not hesitate to prohibit absolutely, as a forbidden thing, the superseding of the Bible by any other book. Of course, the rule would not apply to the reading of an extract to illustrate the lesson.

The Superintendent will often have to deal with unpromising material—teachers of few educational advantages and of limited leisure; and, both for their sake and his own, he will be anxious to encourage them to avail themselves of any assistance within their reach. Where practicable, he will advocate their joining some Normal Class, which, alas! is only to be found as yet in the metropolis and some of the larger towns.

Preparation Classes are more easily formed; but these, again, are comparatively scarce, and the great majority of teachers will have only their unaided study to prepare them for their classes.

There is, however, a recently formed agency that may help teachers, and that is the Normal Students' Association, which has been established to train teachers by the means of prescribed text-books, and written examinations thereon.\*

The formation of Teachers' Libraries is greatly to be desired. Not to speak of Teachers' Own Libraries, which will be referred to hereafter, it is desirable that there should be a library for teachers in connection with every school. It may not always be convenient to have a classroom available for study and for consulting works of reference, but it is a simple matter to get together some books which may be circulated among the teachers. They

\* Particulars of this scheme may be had by addressing the Secretary, Normal Students' Association, 56, Old Bailey.

may themselves contribute to this, and other works can be added from time to time. It will be the pleasure and the duty of the Superintendent to foster and encourage such an effort. Superintendents, as a rule, do too little to assist their teachers during the week to prepare for their Sabbath duties; but here is a way in which practical help can be easily rendered. The number of books will be few at first, but as the advantages which they offer become appreciated, there will arise a desire to extend them. Whether there be Teachers' Libraries or not, preparation, for the most part, will be made at home; and the teacher should possess for himself such helps as may be useful; and, fortunately, materials for assistance are at hand. THE SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION provides a variety of matter designed to help teachers,\* and the Superintendent will, from time to time, bring such under their notice. Where Preparation Classes can be established, of course there must be uniform lessons; but, in any case, it will be well for the Superintendent to encourage the teaching of the same lessons throughout the school. If a very strong antagonistic feeling existed in the minds of any teachers, there would be some difficulty in carrying this out; and it must be conceded that circumstances may sometimes arise which may render it desirable for the senior classes to pursue some special studies of God's Word. As a rule, however, teachers will be ready to fall in with the plan of the school, which should be a uniform series of lessons throughout. There are many advantages in such a course: as has been indicated, it is a necessary condition to the establishment of a Preparation Class; it gives a harmony and a consistency to the engagements of the school; the hymns and prayers can be in keeping; and the closing exercise of the school can relate to the subject of the teaching, and thus help to drive home the lessons taught in the class. The arguments for a uniform lesson throughout the school

\* For list of such material, see Appendix.

do not apply with so much force to the Infant Class, for various reasons; one of the principal being that the class does not usually assemble in the main schoolroom and, therefore, does not join in the closing service. Whoever may conduct this exercise, the Superintendent should, as a rule, require that it should have some relation to the lesson of the afternoon. Here, again, there may arise occasions when a departure is desirable: no rules should be so inflexible as never to admit of being relaxed; but it must be evident that the address or review will be more likely to be useful if it aim at impressing what has already been taught, rather than at introducing some entirely new subject. The value of such a closing exercise will be in proportion as all the classes have been engaged on the same lesson. A uniform series is an incentive to the teachers' preparation: a system, or rather, want of system, that allows every teacher to select his own lessons, offers temptations to desultory and unprepared teaching.

Sometimes schools that are exceptionally favoured by having a good Preparation Class, or a minister who will draw out a series of lessons, and go through them with his teachers, may use their own course; but it will be generally more advantageous to adopt those prepared by the Sunday School Union; if for no other reason than that lesson help is furnished in a variety of forms by competent writers. It must be manifest that no individually selected course could be accompanied by so much help, so conveniently and so cheaply obtainable; and if some teachers have all the needed commentaries and works of reference for a thorough preparation, the great majority of teachers are not thus provided.

But whether it be possible to hold a weekly Preparation or Training Class, or whether any of the teachers are able to attend a Normal Class, or not, the Superintendent will see to it that a Teachers' Meeting be held monthly for the conduct of all business relating to the school. In many

schools the meeting is held but quarterly; but this is too seldom. If it be said that this is sufficiently often to transact all the business, it may be answered, that probably a meeting once in six months would suffice to get through all that might be brought before it; but a good deal that might happen in the intervals it would be well to bring before the teachers. The school is not, like a day school, to be managed by a master or mistress, or an outside committee: the Superintendent is not an autocrat whose will is law, and who has no need to consult others. Very often he has had less experience in many directions than some of his teachers, who are unwilling to give up their classes to assume a more general, though a less personal and direct, control. He may have had considerable experience in teaching, or he may not; at all events, he cannot know the temper and the needs of individual classes so well as the teachers; and if he be wise, for his own sake, he will be anxious to meet his teachers as often as possible. There will be teachers to propose and receive, the working of the school to review, new plans and agencies to discuss, meetings to be arranged, and a great many more matters that will present themselves to officers and teachers who are deeply interested in their school and anxious to make it as perfect as possible. Of course, the school may be carried on in a machine-like manner, and with all the precision and order of a machine; but that will not be to develop heartiness and enthusiasm in the teachers, nor loving attachment in the scholars. The success of a school, to a large extent, depends on its moral and spiritual tone, and this can only be promoted by constant and friendly contact and association.

The Sunday school will always labour under many disadvantages as compared with the day school, but in the love that pervades it there may be a moral force which the latter can never know; and it is this subtle, far-reaching power, felt alike by teachers and scholars,



that the Superintendent will be most anxious to deepen. There is no surer way to generate, keep alive, and diffuse this power, than frequent meetings of the teachers and officers.

The Monthly Meeting should be on a fixed date, so that the evening may be always kept clear. There will be no lack of matters to discuss and talk over; indeed, the very meeting will supply topics of interesting conversation: and it may be said that the more frequently such meetings are held, the more interesting and profitable will they become. Teachers will get to know one another, and in large cities and towns, opportunities for social intercourse are all too few. Such meetings evoke the sympathies as well as elicit the ideas of the teacher, and do much to promote good feeling no less than to call forth suggestions and plans which may prove most valuable in the conduct of the school.

Where possible, the Superintendent will endeavour to secure the presence of the minister, who, if he be wise, will gladly avail himself of such opportunities of meeting and co-operating with the teachers, and of becoming acquainted with the working of the school.

Most well-regulated schools have a code of rules: there are some where usage, well-defined and observed, takes the place of written rules, but generally there are printed regulations which guide the management of the school. Where these exist it is incumbent on the Superintendent that he should inform the teachers of them as they join the school; and he, of all others, will be careful to observe them. He will not ignore a rule because he disapproves of it; he will take the earliest opportunity of getting it altered or abrogated.

The Superintendent will impress on the scholars, on entrance, and continuously afterwards, that these are rules to be obeyed; that order and discipline are necessary for the well-being of the school, and that they must be observed.

He will not needlessly multiply orders, but he will insist on those that are given being obeyed. If he notice any disobedience or disorder he will quietly draw the teacher's attention thereto: if he be at the desk and unable to go direct to the class, he will not hesitate to mention it or the scholar by name publicly. Serious infractions of rules, insolent or defiant treatment of teachers, are best dealt with after school when the unruly scholar's companions are dismissed: it is more difficult to get a refractory one to own his fault in presence of the class.

But the public enforcement of discipline will be a matter of rare occurrence, and when it is necessary the Superintendent will take care to make it understood that it is for the well-being of the school, as well as of the individual, that rules should be obeyed. He will constantly show that the aim and object of the officers and teachers, are to make the school the pleasantest place possible, where love rules, and where the happiness of all is desired. It will rest largely with the Superintendent to impress this feeling, and to make it realized.

He will be one of the first at school, to welcome the scholars and teachers with a cheery word or pleasant smile; he will occasionally notice some scholar arriving without his Bible and hymn-book, and if the home be not far distant he may be sent for them. He will have selected hymns bearing on the lessons, but he will, perhaps, be glad of one of the teachers to open the school. As soon as possible, he will arrange for classes without teachers, and will get the school settled down to the teaching, which he will be careful to interrupt as little as possible. The librarian need not disturb the teachers if the books be placed at the end of the form for him to collect. The Superintendent will quietly check any class where disorder or noise may manifest itself: and sometimes, if the voices generally be too loud, or more than one is heard in several of the classes, it may be well for him to sound the

bell, and bring the teaching to a momentary suspension, after which the school will resume more quietly.

The arrangements for the closing exercise will be in the hands of the Superintendent, who will either conduct it himself, or obtain the help of some of the teachers in rotation. It will be well, as often as possible, that the exercise should partake of the nature of a review of the afternoon's lesson; but, in any case, it should be generally understood that the lesson or some salient feature of it should form the subject of the closing exercise. Occasions will arise when it will be desirable to secure the services of some stranger, who may prefer to be left unfettered in his choice of subject.

The Superintendent will deem it important to secure reverent attention during the devotional exercises; and at the close of the school will insist on a quiet and orderly dismissal.

New scholars will be admitted after the opening of the school. The secretary may ascertain if they have attended any school in the neighbourhood previously; if so, they should be supplied with a form, or they should be told to ask their parents to attend, or to signify their desire for their children's entrance. When the names of the new scholars are entered, the Superintendent will assign them to classes. Some Superintendents give new scholars a paper with the school regulations for their own and their parents' guidance. It is too often the case that parents are left to suppose that they have no duties towards the school, whereas, they should understand that they incur certain responsibilities towards their children and the school. It is a wise rule in many schools, that every scholar must be supplied with a Bible and hymn-book of his own, and where such obtains the parents should be informed, when their children enter.

CLASSIFICATION OF SCHOLARS.—The Superintendent will from time to time consult his teachers as to the progress

of new scholars, or as to those whose conduct may not be satisfactory. Sometimes it may be deemed desirable for the Superintendent to speak to a scholar privately, or even to remove him to another class, after consultation with the teacher. The classification and removal of scholars are often difficult matters, and require much tact and judgment. As a rule, it is unwise to disturb the relation between teachers and scholars, especially when there seem to be a strong personal attachment and a good influence at work; but sometimes scholars would be benefited by removal to another class. It will be well that the senior classes on each side of the school should be looked to as desirable goals to be reached: it serves to retain scholars when the senior classes have this prestige; but in the lower classes it will be unwise to establish any priority of position, the classes being designated after the names of their teachers, and not numerically. Towards the end of the year the Superintendent will consult with his teachers as to the removal of scholars who, it may be deemed, would be benefited by a change; and any changes that are necessary may be made at the New Year. Of course, if circumstances seem to warrant him, removals may be made at any period of the year; but anything like a general or systematic moving up is to be strongly deprecated. It is desirable that the Superintendent should know all his scholars, at least by name.

THE SUPERINTENDENT DURING THE WEEK.—There remains but to notice the duties of the Superintendent during the week. These will vary with local surroundings. In London it will not always be possible for him to visit all sick scholars, though he will make an effort to see those who may be seriously ill. Some Superintendents make a point of visiting all absentee scholars, and doubtless such a habit gives them an immense advantage: it brings them into contact with the parents, and enables them the better to secure their co-operation; and the knowledge of

the scholars' homes which visitation affords, tends largely to increase the influence of their Superintendent over them.

The Superintendent will do all he can to bridge over the week, from Sunday to Sunday, by gathering the scholars in various ways. Where possible, he will either promote or encourage a Band of Hope, a Christian Band, a Youths' Institute, or Young Men's Association, and a similar association for young women, or any such agencies for the mental or spiritual welfare of the scholars. He may not personally conduct any or all of these, but it will be well for his influence, and well for the scholars that he should be identified with all such efforts. It is not desirable that such organizations should be separate from the school; they should be closely connected with it. Superintendents of mission schools will also interest themselves in any philanthropic or religious agencies for adults—Bible Classes, Penny Banks, Sick Clubs, or any means that may be devised to assist and to elevate.

#### THE SECRETARY.

The office of Secretary is too often underrated, whereas the position is one of the utmost importance. If the superintendent be very efficient and vigorous, he will need a good Secretary to second and support him; and if the superintendent be not all that could be wished, there will be the need of a first-rate Secretary to supply, in some measure, his deficiencies.

The Secretary should enter on his duties inspired with a sense of the utmost importance of his office: he will feel that there is scope for all the wisdom, zeal, energy, and tact that he can command. He will consider himself the superintendent's first lieutenant or right hand, to carry out all his instructions, to further all his plans, to support him in every possible way; and, in addition, he will carry out the duties pertaining especially to his office.

He will keep the school registers, marking the attendance of teachers, taking the number of teachers and scholars present at each session, entering quarterly or half yearly the names and addresses in the teachers' registers, which he will carefully keep, and issue and collect every Sunday, unless any of the teachers prefer being the custodians themselves. He will keep in the school journal a record of each Sunday's work, marking anything of special importance. He will collect, either weekly or quarterly, as may be the rule of the school, money contributed for missionary or other objects. He will keep a supply of Bibles and hymn-books, issuing them as they may be required. He will see to it that there is a proper supply of all school material.

During the week, it will be well if he can take some part in the management of any agencies that may be set on foot; for his acquaintance with the teachers and scholars, as well as his official experience, will be very useful in any other position which he may fill.

In Preparation or Teachers' Meetings he will have an agenda of business ready to be brought forward; and he will be prepared to furnish all necessary information relating to the business transacted at the last meeting, or to be entered upon at this. At every meeting he will take the minutes, and this duty, by making him familiar with past business, will constitute him an authority on all matters of custom and procedure.

In arrangements for any meetings he will take a prominent share: see that the speakers or those appointed to take part are advised of their duties; be present early to see that the necessary arrangements are made for speakers and reporters, if any are expected, as well as for the assembly. Generally, too, the correspondence of the school will devolve upon the Secretary; and much depends upon the promptitude of this part of his duties. As a rule, speakers can be best secured by being invited at as distant

a date as possible from the time of the meeting ; and it is safest to remind them of their engagement as the day draws near, and to give them plain directions for reaching the place of meeting.

One matter connected with speakers at Sunday-school meetings may be here stated, for it is one that gets often overlooked, and that is, the payment of their expenses. The fact that nothing is charged for services should make this matter all the more necessary and obvious ; but, alas ! it is not so, and often is it that speakers are put to expense, more or less considerable, which no one thinks of offering to repay. It should be the Secretary's place to think of this and see that it is attended to. This want of thought and attention is observed not only at Sunday-school meetings ; but friends connected with religious work should, above others, seek to do all that courtesy and justice demand.

In this, as in many other matters, the Secretary will see to the carrying out of little details which often fail of being accomplished, because they may fall within the range of no one's duty. The Secretary will not only charge himself with his own well-defined work, but he will give a general survey, that nothing may be omitted to be done for want of assignment to any specific person.

He will, or should be, a man full of suggestions, quick to take the initiative, careful of details, and of ready adaptation. In organizing or carrying on new movements, much will depend on him : he will find out what others are doing, and learn their methods ; he will interest teachers and others whose help may be needed. In the development of week-day engagements the Secretary will be a prime factor ; and as these are becoming more and more part of Sunday-school machinery and agency, a good Secretary is more than ever of first importance. Mixing freely with the teachers and other elder scholars he will gauge their capacities and be ready to suggest to the superintendent

suitable persons for any new movements or agencies. It need not be urged that it is wise for the sake of these efforts, as well as for the benefit of the school generally—not to speak of the advantage to themselves—that promising young men and women should be enlisted in some work so as to get well into harness. The Sunday school too often loses its most hopeful scholars, because, as they grow up there is presented no sphere for their services; and they drift away to places where their energies and powers are turned to account.

#### THE LIBRARIAN.

The office of Librarian is becoming an increasingly important one, because the question of literature for the scholars is more and more a subject that must be considered. This is not the place to discuss what is the object and what should be the scope of the Sunday-school library. It may be enough to urge that with the increasing activity of the press and the enterprise of publishers, with so many cheap issues of sound as well as of undesirable works, the Sunday school should surely not be impassive and listless. The Sunday school should not be careless and indifferent as to what its scholars read. It should not be inactive when all round there are so many agencies for disseminating literature. If this be so, the Librarian is an important officer; he should have a good knowledge of books, and he should be deeply impressed with the necessity of rightly directing the reading of young people. The custody and distribution of books is a simple matter—and one on which we do not here propose to treat—compared with a love of books, and an enthusiastic desire to promote their circulation among the young. The Librarian will make himself acquainted with the ages and educational standpoint of the various classes, so as to be able to recommend suitable books, or supply them.



unasked when the scholars have not made a wise selection. He will put himself in communication with the teachers, and supply them with the names and numbers of suitable books for them to put upon their scholars' cards. A library often misses half its usefulness, because the scholars do not present a well-filled card of suitable books selected: the consequence is, that the Librarian, in the hurry of his duties, is apt to select the most unsuitable books for the scholars. It has often happened that elder scholars, receiving a succession of inappropriate and unsuitable books, have given up the use of the library altogether. It must be remembered that the cheap issues of standard and other works, the floods of periodical literature that pour forth month by month, and the establishment of libraries at Board schools render it more than ever important that this branch of Sunday-school work should be efficiently administered. An earnest and zealous Librarian will report from time to time to the Teachers' Meeting the condition of the library, and will urge his plea persistently for new books, when he may deem a replenishing absolutely necessary. And if the school funds be not adequate, an appeal should be made by the school to the church, whose members should be all interested, as they are certainly responsible for the condition of the school, when its requirements and its claims have been clearly urged.

Yet, how seldom is it that the church takes any interest in the library; that its members ever make any contributions to its shelves. One almost despairs of the Sunday-school library ever assuming its proper position and exerting its due influence, because churches take no interest in it, and its replenishing is left so entirely to the teachers, whose means are seldom equal to the demand, and to the school funds, which are not always in a flourishing condition.

A well-stocked library and an energetic, intelligent

Librarian might do a great work in forming the taste of the scholars for wholesome, useful reading, and in contributing to the profitable and pleasant employment of their leisure hours.

There is no need why the Librarian should be drawn from the ranks of the teachers: on the contrary, this is an office that the church might well be called upon to fill; for there are many men, or even women, who may not deem themselves called upon to teach, who may yet serve the school very efficiently in this direction. The owner of a well-appointed library, or even one possessed of but a moderate number of good books, and valuing them aright, would not be content so long as the school library was so ill supplied. Finding that it consisted for the most part of small story-books, selected, mainly, because they were cheap, so that the pittance to be expended in the purchase of new books might secure as many as possible, he would endeavour to provide for the intelligent youths and maidens growing up, who need more solid reading than religious tales, however well intended, and for the young men and women, who should be made to feel that the Sunday school aims to help them on their intellectual, as well as on their moral, side.

So far it has been the endeavour to indicate the purpose of the several offices pertaining to the Sunday school, and to define generally the duties relating thereto. It is not enough that any one officer or teacher should know the duties of his own position: he must clearly understand his relation to others, and fully realize that all are inseparably united for one common purpose.

#### DUTIES OF SCHOLARS.

So far the mutual duties of officers and teachers have been dealt with. Are there no duties pertaining to the

scholars? Among the younger scholars it will be enough that teachers impress them with a sense of their interest in them, and get them to understand the real object and purpose of the Sunday school, and the motive and aim of the teachers in attending. This is by no means an easy matter: many of the younger children fancy officers and teachers must have some self-interested motive in coming, that they are in some way remunerated for their attendance, and that they, the scholars, are under no particular obligation to behave well, still less to be grateful. It will be well at an early stage to disabuse their minds of such notions, and to make them understand the true reason for the establishment of the school, and the motive that impels the officers and teachers to attend. This should have some influence in securing the respect and obedience of the scholars, in assuring them that the rules of the school are dictated in love, and that order and discipline should not be deemed irksome, but as necessary to the pleasant and efficient working of the school. They should be made to feel that the aim of the officers and teachers is to make the school a bright, pleasant, cheerful place, where the Best of Books is to be studied on the Best of Days, and where the love of a merciful and tender Father and Saviour is to be made known. Even young scholars may be made to feel, if properly appealed to, that they have much to do in making the school all that it is intended to be, and that by their cheerful obedience and their ready compliance with the wishes of those set over them they may do much to make all around them happy.

If scholars are to feel they have their part to do in the successful working of the school, and there are *mutual* duties as between teachers and scholars, care must be taken to make the school as *homelike* as possible, that the regulations are designed for the happiness of all, and that the rule of the school is administered in a kind, gentle, loving spirit.

When scholars get older they may be made to feel that much more is expected of them; that their presence is helpful, and their absence quite a loss to the class; that they are concerned in maintaining the prestige and interest of the school; that the younger ones will look up to them, and that their loyalty to the school will have much to do in forming a public opinion that the Sunday school is not a place merely for children to be sent to, but a desirable place for young men and women to attend, of their own accord. When senior scholars learn that they are thus valued, they will be anxious to prove themselves worthy of this confidence and trust; they will be pleased to show more actively their desire to be useful. Once make them feel that the success of the class, the welfare of the school, is in any way dependent on them, and they will wish to co-operate as far as possible. They will be glad to take some share in the conduct of the class, to take up some duty of visitation, or charge of funds, or some service in the week: and in proportion as the teacher is able to show the scholars how much devolves on them will they be anxious to prove their sense of the trust imposed on them. Then, from time to time, they will be appealed to for service beyond the class, for occasional or stated teaching, for help in the library, for co-operation in week-evening engagements. If they have rightly imbibed the spirit of the Sunday school, they will be impelled by the motive that underlies the apostolic precept, "Freely ye have received, freely give."

When officers, teachers, and scholars shall fully recognize the duties that belong to others as well as to themselves, and shall learn to feel how much depends on their hearty co-operation, then indeed will the Sunday school be shown working as a harmonious and symmetrical whole, and will be likely to accomplish, under the happiest conditions, the great and blessed work it has in view.

BENJAMIN CLARKE.

# ON ASSOCIATED EFFORT; PREPARATION, TRAINING, AND NORMAL CLASSES; CONVENTIONS, ETC.



## BENEFITS OF ASSOCIATED EFFORT.

WHILE it is our strong desire in the present mannals to urge the need of personal and individual study, and, indeed, its sufficiency for all the absolute necessities of the teacher, we cannot under-value the effect of co-operation both in study and work.

“Iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.” It is in his home study that the teacher becomes full of information; in his private prayer that he becomes strong for holy labour; in his own observation of himself and his surroundings that he more completely understands his material, his instruments, and his work: but there may yet be lacking a breadth of view, a readiness of grasp, which contact and converse with others will alone give.

The benefits of associated work are so obvious that it would be waste of time to enlarge upon them: it is sufficient to hint at a few. *Mentally*, those who not only strive after a common object, but prepare for and consult over their work together, are aided and quickened immensely. The different opinions and varying tastes, the greater brilliancy of some and solidity of others, result in

a more rapid and at the same time more complete attainment of one object of the teacher, viz. his own intellectual preparation and equipment.

The *moral* benefits are still more important. The teacher, if a true learner, can never be solitary, for he has his own Teacher at his right hand; but yet he needs the stimulus of human fellowship, and will find continual encouragement in the conscious sympathy of others. Meeting together for prayer, study, and conference, Christian workers will find their difficulties lessened, their experience enlarged, their mistakes rectified: they will avoid monotony, and will learn very often to make light of what by themselves they have felt to be disheartening discouragements.

*The teacher receives help from mutual effort.* In the preparation of his lesson for the coming Sunday, in resolving the difficulties which he encounters in his work, in discovering the principles which, rightly known and used, will make that work easy and pleasant, nothing is like the sympathetic counsel of his fellows. Help is in this way both received and given.

*He gains stimulus and encouragement.* The solitary worker is often subject to discouragements which disappear when he faces them in company with others. To use the soldier's phrase, he "keeps touch" with his fellows, and is thus helped to press on steadily and boldly. The successes of others will encourage us, and fill us with a noble emulation, while we in our turn will be able to stimulate our friends to effort.

*The best kind of economy is effected in co-operation.* Sunday-school teachers will often avoid much painful labour and save valuable time by combination. We are benefited by the experience and knowledge of others, and in our turn impart to them of our fulness, when we meet together for counsel and study. In the preparation of a lesson, for instance, where each teacher comes pre-

pared with information he has gathered, much toil and delay will be spared to all. This is a very important consideration for busy people who have but small leisure for study.

*New and improved methods of teaching and organization are most readily disseminated by mutual conference.* Where schools and teachers are isolated, either through lack of opportunity for, or neglect of, counsel with others, there will always be a danger of moving in a groove, and using inferior or obsolete methods, unsuited to the necessities of the time, even if no risk is run of mistaking our true object, and lowering our ideal. But when teachers meet together to consider their work in any of its aspects, they cannot fail to promote its efficiency, on the one side by the relation of successes, on the other by the confession of failures.

*The younger teachers will gain special benefit from the counsel and experience of their seniors.* Experience is the best guide; but we may not only learn from our own, but almost as effectually from that of others. In no way does this experience of our friends help us so much as when communicated by their living voice. And since it must be remembered that education as a science is yet in its infancy, we have the more reason for conferring together, comparing our observations, and arranging our conclusions; that not only may we be helped and encouraged, but that we may contribute somewhat to render the religious education of the young as complete and effective as it ought to be.

Within the short limits assigned to this paper, it will not be possible to deal exhaustively with its subject, by laying down complete rules for the conduct of meetings of Sunday-school teachers. It will be sufficient for our purpose to indicate some of the methods by which teachers have sought usefully and profitably to combine for mutual study, training, and encouragement.

## PREPARATION CLASSES.

This term has usually been applied to regularly held meetings of teachers for the study of the lesson or lessons of the following Sunday. It will be plain that this purpose can be attained by the common effort of any number, small or large; and that in all probability, a small meeting of teachers, well known to each other, will be more successful in the effective preparation of the lesson than if a large number, less intimate, were assembled; since the interchange of thought and experience will be freer. It is for this reason we urge that every school should have its own Preparation Class; and that the younger and less experienced teachers especially should be encouraged to attend its meetings. In America such classes, under the title of Teachers' Meetings, are far more common than in England. Indeed, in some schools, the attendance of teachers is made imperative.

Such a class as this needs but little organization, and, if heartily and intelligently conducted, will soon justify its existence.

*The conductor* of the class should possess or acquire certain qualifications. It is expected of him that he shall prepare the lesson, not *for* the teachers, but *with* them; thus, while he has so far studied the subject beforehand as to have it clearly outlined in his own mind, he must permit and encourage the minds of his fellow-students to see the lesson from their own points of view. He must rather seek to make each member of the class contribute to the common stock of knowledge. The growing interest which the ministers of our Churches manifest in the progress and efficiency of their Sunday schools, points to the conclusion that their office gives them the claim to this duty of helping their teachers in their work; a duty which their own sacred occupation especially fits them to accomplish. Where press of other engagements



prevents the minister from occupying the position of president, the superintendent of the school, or one of the more experienced teachers should be appointed. But an essential for the success of the Preparation Class will be the appointment of a leader who is himself a true teacher, earnest in the work, sympathetic with others, and regular and punctual in his own attendance.

*The place of meeting* is a matter of no slight moment. Many classes, begun with enthusiasm, have dwindled away and come to an end, because of a room too large to be cheerful or comfortable, or from causes which could easily, with a little forethought, have been avoided or remedied. Where the class is small the meeting may be held more pleasantly in the house of the leader or one of the members; but it is of the utmost importance that it should be held regularly, if possible always in one place; that the room should be in readiness punctually a little before the time of beginning, and that those who are responsible for the conduct of the meeting should be in their places early.

*The time of meeting* must depend upon the convenience of the teachers themselves; but punctuality both in commencing and closing (the latter especially often a neglected virtue) should be strictly observed. As a general rule the session should be short, not more than an hour and a quarter, or a half, to avoid trenching upon the scanty leisure of the busier teachers and the home duties of all.

*The method* of conducting the class exercise will be to some extent shaped by local circumstances. The opening and closing devotions should have a distinct relation to the object of the meeting and the subject of the lesson under inquiry, for it should always be remembered that the teacher's duty is to learn the truth for himself before he can rightly communicate it to others. As to the mode of studying the lesson, it is only needful for us now to

refer to the counsels given in another manual of this series.\* The leader of the class will do well to recollect that among other objects two are paramount, viz. to promote the acquisition of full information on the lesson, and to lead his students to a habit of clear and definite teaching in their classes. The first is best attained by causing each member of the class to contribute his share to the study of the evening; and the second by taking care that the salient truths of the Scripture lesson are clearly present before the minds of all present; if possible in the form of an outline sketch of the lesson itself.

*The books* for use in the class exercise will not be numerous. Every teacher present should have his own Bible with marginal references and maps; but the help of commentaries and such works of reference should be sought beforehand, and certain of the class should be responsible for so doing: this will increase the interest of the meeting and save valuable time. But it would be well to have a larger map in sight of all for use when desired, and a good concordance at the right hand of the conductor of the class or one of the members. Paper and pencils will also be found useful, since every member should be encouraged to take notes. It is much to be desired that all our Sunday schools should be provided with a thoroughly good library for the special benefit of the teachers, and the Preparation Class would be greatly helped in its work by the judicious use of the books contained therein.†

### THE TRAINING CLASS

Has a wider scope and more inclusive aim than the Preparation Class. Its programme will contain not only the study and construction of lessons, but model lessons

\* "The Young Teacher," ch. v.

† Ibid., ch. viii.

delivered to classes of scholars of various ages, as well as practice lessons by the younger teachers, such teaching to be followed by the criticism of the members present. There will be occasional lectures by competent persons on the various details of the teacher's office and work, upon Eastern geography, manners and customs illustrative of the Holy Scriptures, as well as upon many other kindred topics of practical use. The meetings will afford opportunity for the discussion of new ideas and fresh methods, and for the ventilation of controverted subjects.

Such a class as this is already carried on with much profit to its members in many different localities; and it would be much to the benefit of Sunday-school work if the plan were adopted in every centre. But it must be pointed out, that to give full interest and pleasure to the meetings they must be attended by a larger number of teachers than are necessary for the Preparation Class. Hence it is the fit work of a combination of schools such as form a *Local Sunday School Union*. The *place of meeting* should be central, convenient in size, well lighted and comfortable, especially in the winter, when the best attendances are to be looked for.

The arrangements should be under the charge of two or three of the committee of the Union, who should be responsible for the issue of programmes and notices, the records of the class meetings, and the management generally. The conduct of the meetings themselves should be in the hands of one person—president, chairman, or by whatever name he may be called, himself a competent and sympathetic Sunday-school teacher; but as much variety as possible should be sought in the list of those friends who supply the material of each evening's study. In such variety, and in enlisting the personal co-operation of as many of the class members as possible, will be found two great elements of success.

It will generally be advisable to issue programmes for short periods, not more than three months in duration; and in many localities to allow the summer months to pass without any meetings. This will tend to give greater vigour and freshness to the class when in session.

The following may be taken as a specimen outline of a quarter's work. The lessons in each case should be those of the succeeding Sunday :—

- I. Preview of the quarter's lessons.
- II. Infant class lesson (practice).
- III. Preparation of the lesson.
- IV. Senior class lesson (practice).
- V. Lecture—How to secure attention.
- VI. Three outline lessons—infant, junior and senior (written by members of the class).
- VII. Junior class lesson (practice).
- VIII. Lecture—How to collect and use illustrations.
- IX. Preparation of the lesson.
- X. Infant class lesson (practice).
- XI. Lecture—Geography of Bible lands.
- XII. Conversation meeting. Class discipline and order.
- XIII. A review of the quarter's lessons.

### THE NORMAL OR INTRODUCTORY CLASS

Has for its object the preparation of those who purpose to undertake the work of Sunday-school teaching, as well as the help of such as are actually engaged in that work. As its first name implies, it has to do chiefly with the principles and theory of Teaching as a Science. It will readily be admitted that our Sunday-school instruction would be far more efficient, mentally, morally, and spiritually, if our teachers themselves had at the outset qualified themselves by a short course of training such as is implied in these words.

The following is the syllabus of the course of study which for some years past has (with slight variations)

been pursued by the class held at the Lecture Hall of the Sunday School Union, London :—

I. Introductory. The Sunday School Teacher's Work and Qualifications. Encouragements. Some Hints on Self-Training.

II., III. The Mental Nature and Powers of Children. How they are exercised in the acquisition of truth. Their Treatment and Development.

IV. Ideas and Words; or the means of presenting Truth clearly and forcibly.

V. Attention, its Nature and Use. How to rouse and sustain it.

VI. Memory; or the Retention of Knowledge—why indispensable. How to promote its exercise.

VII. Judgment and Reason. Their use to the Teacher in applying truth.

VIII., IX. Methods of Teaching: Pictorial, Illustrative, Questioning, etc.

X. Some Hints on the Use of the Blackboard.

XI., XII. Construction of Lessons: Practical Rules and Examples—Narrative, Figurative, and Doctrinal.

XIII., XIV. The Moral Powers. Their Nature and Development. How the Teacher can use them.

XV. Moral Training. The Bible as the Book of the Sunday School Teacher.

XVI. General Rules for the Teacher. Order and discipline in the class. The Teacher's relative and official duties. Review.

The manual used has been the "Introductory Class Text Book," by the late Mr. B. P. Pask; and each evening's study has been preceded by half an hour's exercise on the International Lesson of the following Sunday, the leader of the class, as far as possible, illustrating therefrom the chief principles to be taken up in the evening's work. The actual course of study, however, as well as the choice of text books, must be left to the judgment of the conductor of each class, as both must depend very much upon local circumstances; and it will probably be found advisable to make the programme more popular and less technical, by adding to it some subjects of a plainly practical character, such as—

- I. The Bible, its evidences.
- II. The Bible, its interpretation.
- III., IV. The Bible, its structure, development, and history.
- V., VI. Geography of Bible lands.
- VII. Bible manners and customs.

It will be seen that the effective conduct of such a class demands great devotion on the part of the leader, even though he may enlist the aid of other friends to deal with the subjects of study. It should be his aim to prevent monotony and consequent weariness; to secure punctual and regular attendance, and to encourage the full interest and co-operation of all the members. The larger the attendance, the better will be the moral effect of such a class as this: hence it will always be most successfully carried out by the common effort of the schools; in other words, by the Union of the district, which should secure the active sympathy of the ministers of the Churches and officers of the schools in so useful an enterprise.

The following "hints" by Mr. W. H. Groser will be found helpful:—

#### HINTS TO CONDUCTORS OF NORMAL CLASSES.

1. When time and place have been agreed upon for meetings of the Normal Class, see that all members are notified accordingly, that the room is opened, warmed, and lighted, and that seats, tables, blackboard, blank paper, pencils, etc., are all provided. This will be to each member of the class a guarantee of your enterprise, and an inspiration to them to enter enthusiastically upon the new movement.

2. At the appointed hour of meeting—*begin*. Never mind who may be absent or how few present. A punctual leader will soon train a whole class to punctuality.

3. First of all sing part of a hymn, and offer a brief prayer. Two or three verses of Scripture may also be read. The entire opening devotional exercises should not occupy more than five minutes.

4. After this exercise, let the roll of members be called (unless, as is preferable where the class is large, the attendance should have

been marked at entry), and a brief recapitulation of the instructions of the previous meeting be given.

5. Put into a condensed form, for copying by every member of the class, an outline of the lesson or conversation of each meeting. Free use should be made of the blackboard for this purpose.

6. Do not be disheartened by occasional failures to keep up the enthusiasm of a meeting. It is not enthusiasm you are seeking, but knowledge, and ability to make a wise use of knowledge.

7. Never allow controversy. A question box has been found very useful as well as interesting. Some members who are unwilling to ask questions orally, may have their difficulties solved with small expenditure of time.

8. Close the class at the hour announced. Don't drag on until everybody is exhausted by fatigue. One hour and a quarter will usually be found long enough for a Normal Class Lesson.

9. The following Hints on the use of the Handbook, are the fruits of practical experience in Normal Class work :—

(a.) At the first Meeting of each course, let the whole plan of study be briefly outlined, and the more prominent points clearly set forth, by the Conductor.

(b.) The pupils should be required to master the portion for each exercise, so as to be able to give the leading ideas, in answer to questions, though the exact words of the Text Book be not repeated.

(c.) On no account should the Text Book be brought into the class, either by Conductor or pupil.

(d.) Each pupil should be provided with a Bible for reference and illustrations; also a Note Book, or pencil. Taking notes should be largely encouraged.

(e.) Let there be regular and repeated reviews, as the study proceeds, and let the pupils be urged to produce written summaries of each study, with original illustrations and applications of the rules and principles considered. The more the pupils do, the more they will profit.

It must be remembered that any teacher who has conscientiously pursued a course of study such as is indicated above, will have done much to qualify himself for the after-work of actual teaching. Having acquired a fair knowledge of principles and rules, the *practice* of teaching will be found very much more easy and pleasant,

## INSTITUTES.

In America the "Sunday School Institute"—a combination of the Training Class and the Normal Class—has been exceedingly popular and useful.

Conducted usually by one or two of the most efficient Sunday school leaders, and lasting for a limited period—say one or two weeks—they often attract a considerable number of teachers from the schools around, and render efficient practical service to the cause of religious education.

## CONVENTIONS, ETC.

Under this head may be included the more public gatherings of teachers for mutual counsel and encouragement.

The individual schools have their annual meetings, at which some of the addresses usually refer especially to the teacher's work and duties; this is yet more the case with the annual meetings of our local Sunday School Unions. In addition, many of these hold periodical conferences, at which practical Sunday school topics are discussed. It is easy to see how very powerful an influence such meetings may have, if properly managed, upon not only the teachers who actually attend them, but indirectly upon all with whom they are associated. If the topics discussed are of real value and interest, not only the words of the chief speakers, but the debates or discussions which follow, should correct errors, widen the judgment, and awake the enthusiasm of all who are present; and their individual work should, in consequence, be better done.

The Autumnal Conventions which have occasionally been held in England, lasting over two or three days, and the large County or District Conferences, usually held on Good Friday or Easter Monday in popular centres, have done good service in concentrating attention on Sunday



school work and promoting its efficiency; but in America the SUNDAY SCHOOL CONVENTION has been welded into a system which has rendered it an immense power for good.

Besides the International Convention, which is held triennially in one of the large cities, and is always crowded with delegates from the United States and Canada, many of the States have their own Annual Conventions, continuing several days, and largely attended by ministers and teachers; and some of the States are so thoroughly organized that each county in the States has its own Convention on a smaller scale, so that questions of importance and opportunities of improvement are brought within the reach of all, and the Sunday school system is exalted to its proper position in the sight both of the church and the world.

*The School Anniversary Meeting* affords one of the rare opportunities for the teachers to approach the parents of their scholars, and to interest them in their common object, the welfare of their children. Too frequently, however, these meetings fail in their object by the length, vagueness, and general character of the addresses which are given; a fault often chargeable upon those who are responsible for the arrangements. As a rule the meeting should be short, the addresses brief, few, and on definite subjects, selected and announced previously.

*The Annual Meetings of Sunday School Unions* have also suffered from similar defects, and like remedies are to be advocated. A judicious interpolation of well-performed music, and the announcement beforehand of the subjects to be treated in the addresses, will be found of no small benefit.

*Conferences of Teachers* usually succeed better in the provinces than in London, owing to various causes; but those who attend them almost invariably find great help from the discussion of such subjects as are dealt with. Some of the most successful are held under the auspices of

local Unions, in different portions of their districts, and perhaps the most attractive and useful are those where a model lesson is given to a class by an experienced and skilful teacher.

*Conventions* are a larger development of the same idea. These may be, and are, held annually, by groups or associations of Sunday School Unions, and are attended by delegates appointed by all the schools in affiliation. They are productive of much enthusiasm and good feeling; and, if the delegates (as they should do) take back with them a full report, and some part of the spirit of the meetings, they cannot fail to be of lasting influence for good.

*Lectures to Teachers.* It may further be suggested that local Unions can organize short courses of lectures to teachers upon subjects of practical utility, such as the Study of the Bible, Geography, Natural History, and National Customs illustrative of Scripture, or the Principles of the Teacher's Work. A programme is appended of a course based on the last named:—

1. The true aim of the Sunday School Teacher.—Importance of Self-Training as a means to full efficiency.—Necessity of an acquaintance with (a) the Truth to be taught; (b) the Mental and Moral Natures of the Scholars; (c) the Methods of Instruction and Training.—Application of these principles to the Preparation, Construction, and Teaching of a Scripture Lesson (examples from the International Lesson of next Sunday).

2. Brief sketch of the Mental and Moral Nature.—The more important faculties; how exercised in the acquisition, retention, and use of knowledge.—A few Rules for the Teacher.—Different Stages of Intellectual and Moral Growth, and the principles of their successful treatment.

3. The Bible, the Sunday School Text Book; its special fitness as an instrument of religious education.—Its use in the different divisions of the Sunday school.—Different kinds of Scripture lessons; Narrative, Figurative, and Doctrinal.—Scripture difficulties.—The Teacher's Books and Plan of Study.

4. Discipline and Order.—The Teacher's personal and official

relationships :—(a) to his Scholars ; (b) to his Fellow-Teachers and the Church.—Economy of time and power in the School organization and work.—Difficulties and Discouragements, how to surmount them.

It will be needful for lecturers and leaders of classes always to bear in mind the necessity not only of thoroughness, but of simplicity. Further, they should aim at making the work as practical as possible. Wherever theory can be illustrated by practice, it will be found that the benefit to the students is incalculably greater.

ALFRED SINDALL.

# NORMAL STUDIES FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS.

PREPARED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL  
COMMITTEE FOR NORMAL STUDY.

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